

The costumes of Tibetan opera are lavish, with rich brocades and flamboyant masks. **Page 10**



April showers have given way to May flowers and the annual May wedding spree. **Page 13**



While drawing from many Japanese and Chinese influences, Tarantino by no means overlooks his native action traditions. **Page 11**



BEIJING TODAY

FRIDAY MAY 21 2004

NO. 155

CN11-0120

HTTP://BJTODAY.YNET.COM

Papers Say 'No' to 200,000 Yuan Reward Ad

By Chu Meng

An advertisement offering a 200,000 yuan reward for information regarding a murder was rejected by the two main newspapers in Zhengzhou, Henan Province in March this year. Had it been printed, the advertisement would have stated that the unprecedented sum was being offered in the hope that someone would come forward with information that would help the local police solve the case of the murder of Yangduo village council head Zheng Yanshuan.

Zheng Jianjun, the man offering the reward, is a self-employed truck driver from Yangduo, a village in the Erqi District of Zhengzhou. Zheng told *Beijing Today* in a telephone interview Tuesday that the money was raised by himself and other villagers.

However the two newspapers they approached to advertise the reward told them that with-

out "legal formalities and official certificates," it could not be published.

A popular leader

Zheng Yanshuan, the murder victim, was the 51-year-old leader of Yangduo village council and production team. On March 7, 2002, Zheng along with a village council accountant left Yangduo for Zhengzhou in a Honda. The following morning, he was found murdered 500 meters from Haoshan South Road in

Zhengzhou. The body of the accountant was found in the car, ten kilometers from where Zheng's body had been dumped.

"I thought my father was killed by his personal enemies. You know a leader always has opponents in his work. When my father was alive, he was a popular leader in the village council. He enjoyed helping others. Before he worked for the village council, our village was very poor. He paid tuition fees for children from poor families, and went to visit lonely aged people regularly on holidays and festivals.

He was very generous. He lent money to other people free of interest, and also freely offered advice based on his rich experience. There are tens of people who had borrowed money from my father to buy trucks and worked as self-employed drivers," the victim's oldest son, Zheng Junxian told *Beijing Today* Tuesday.

"The police established a special work team on the case. However, two years have passed and they haven't arrested any suspects yet. Because they have not found any clues or evidence, the investigation has been shelved," Zheng Junxian said.

"When I lost hope, Zheng Jianjun and some other villagers who had received help from my father and who now own their own factories, raised 200,000 yuan to offer as a reward. They hoped the money would encourage someone to provide the police with fresh evidence. In order to ensure as many people as possible knew of the reward being offered, Zheng Jianjun had the idea of putting an advertisement in the newspapers," he said.

Lack of certificates

Zheng Jianjun was one of those who benefitted from the help of Zheng Yanshuan. "He was a very good person and leader. In 1998, my father died, and a year later, my mother and wife both died within one month of each other, leaving me to look after two kids under ten years old. When I was on the brink of collapse, he came to comfort and encourage me. He also helped me organize the three burials," Zheng Jianjun said to *Beijing Today*.

"But it has been bothering me that the police had found no suspects in Zheng Yanshuan's murder. I had the idea of offering a reward when I saw on TV the police had issued a notice for the arrest of a wanted criminal and were offering a 200,000 yuan reward for information leading to his capture," Zheng Jianjun said, "I thought we could do the same thing."

But when he tried to place an advertisement to that effect in Zhengzhou's *Henan Commercial Daily* and *Oriental Home Weekly*, he was told he could not do so without official certificates.

A person from the advertising department of *Henan Commercial Daily*, who declined to give her name, told *Beijing Today* the paper "has never and cannot issue such reward advertisements from ordinary citizens, unless the Public Security Bureau has issued them with a legal certificate, because we cannot guarantee their credibility."

Zhu Guanjun, chief of the political section of Erqi District Branch of Zhengzhou Public Security Bureau told *Beijing Today*, "To push investigation work by economical tools is a good thing. Although the constitution stipulates that citizens are duty-bound to provide the authorities with any relevant clues in criminal cases, many people still subscribe to the idea of the-less-trouble-the-better. Offering reward can solve such problems. But such a huge reward offered by private citizens is unprecedented. It is hard to give it a legal status."

Legal debate

The case has raised considerable debate among legal professionals. Offering a reward



The first group of members of the International Business Leaders Advisory Council for the Mayor of Beijing arrived in Beijing Wednesday.

Photo by Li Shuzhuan

Expo Arrivals

Top business and government representatives arrive in Beijing for the Hi-tech Expo

By Dong Nan

The Kerry Center Hotel welcomed the first highlight event of the Seventh China Beijing International High-Tech Expo yesterday, the Sixth Annual Meeting of International Business Leaders Advisory Council for the Mayor of Beijing.

Twenty-two of the 26 advisors joined the meeting, while those who were absent sent senior representatives of their organizations to represent them.

Most of the advisors are senior executives in Fortune Global 500 companies, including Jurgen Dormann, chairman and CEO of ABB Group, Michael Treschow, chairman of Ericsson Group, Edward Zander, chairman and CEO of Motorola and Alan Lafley, chairman, president and CEO of Procter and Gamble.

Speeches by the advisors focused mainly on two topics: the Olympic Games and Beijing's urban development, and building a well-structured industrial mix for an international metropolis.

Beijing mayor Wang Qishan hosted the meeting, which was also attended by officials from 22 municipal government departments.

On Wednesday, some 400 domestic and overseas bankers, financial institution representatives and banking supervisors gathered in Beijing to discuss China's banking and financing issues at the Beijing International Finance Forum 2004.

for information is a traditional way of encouraging witnesses to come forward.

Ye Ziqiang, an associate professor from the law research institute of the China Academy of Social Sciences explained, "Evidence collection is really a hard nut in investigation. Offering rewards by non-governmental bodies doesn't violate any existing laws or regulations. But the matters concerned are its legitimacy, credibility and effects."

According to Ye, there are three problems in China's evidence collecting system. First, it is a key task of lawyers to collect evidence, but their rights are extremely limited. Second, under China's existing laws, witnesses cannot be compelled to give evidence. They can refuse to give testimony in court without fear of negative consequences. Lastly, there are insufficient measures available to courts for the protection of witnesses, especially in

criminal and sensitive cases. If a potential witness sees no advantage in testifying, and if he puts himself at risk by doing so, he is unlikely to come forward in the first place.

Yang Zhanwu, attorney at law from Beijing Jingdu Law Firm, told *Beijing Today*, "Rewards offered by private citizens have proven effective. In the past, for both legal and moral reasons, we didn't advocate offering rewards to witnesses. However in a market economy, we should consider giving some financial allowances to them. I believe it should be legalized. Thus, we can better protect their rights, and judicial organs can better investigate cases."

Liu Gang, who is studying for a master's degree in law at China Southwest University, told *Beijing Today* "In order to solve the problem of legitimacy and credibility, the reward provider should first give the money to a legal official department. Then the department grants him a financial certificate. With such a certificate, people can ask the media to publish advertisements, or ask the public security ministry to

release an announcement."

Zhang Jianjun's unprecedented offer of a reward has attracted much attention from the local media in Henan. In response to the pressure of public opinion, the Erqi District Branch of Zhengzhou Public Security Bureau has formed a special work team to re-investigate Zheng Yanshuan's case.

"In fact, although I know they are helping me and my dead father, I neither support nor oppose what Zhang Jianjun and the other villagers have done, because it will have both positive and negative effects on my father's case," said Zheng Junxian, "It may be helpful, it may not. A witness might come forward, tempted by the money. But at the same time, such publicity can also serve as a warning to the criminals, who will lay low after seeing such advertisements."

Zheng says he believes the police are dedicated to solving his father's case. Whether or not the 200,000 yuan reward helps turn up new evidence, he believes the police will do their best.

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Free Personal Classifieds

Beijing Today is launching free personal classifieds service. For sale and wanted ads, situations wanted and vacant, language exchange and personals, and rentals will be

printed free of charge. Email your personal classifieds (in English and Chinese) to info@ynet.com. Personal classifieds should conform to relevant laws and regulations.

China's 'Nasdaq' Launched

By Sun Yongjian / Gao Xiaoli

The long-expected Small and Medium-sized Enterprise (SME) board was approved by the State Council and China Securities Regulatory Commission (CSRC) on May 17 to be established at the Shenzhen Stock Exchange.

The SME board will be an independent component, but subject to the main board of the Shenzhen Stock Exchange. It will focus on SMEs with good growth and high content of technology, according to a press release from the CSRC Monday. Market analysts predict that the required capital stocks for enterprises will be more than 30 million shares, according to Shanghai Securities.

According to the SME board special trading rules issued by Shenzhen Stock Exchange Wednesday, there are four major differences between the SME board trading system and

that of the main board.

First, the SME board will introduce open gather bidding, unlike the closed bidding system on the main board; Second, the closing quotation will be fixed by gather bidding, while the main board adopts a weighted average quotation; Third, the trading information disclosure system and suspending of the trading system due to abnormal fluctuations will be improved on the SME board; Finally, in order to reflect trends on the SME board, the SME Board Index will be established and publicized in the future.

A CSRC spokesman stressed at a press conference Monday that the listing standards of the SME board should be consistent with those of the main board.

As early as 2000, Shenzhen had planned to launch a Nasdaq-style secondary board market. It actually sus-

pended initial public offerings (IPOs) on the main board to prepare for the new market, but the slump in similar markets overseas and bursting of the tech-stocks bubbles caused Chinese authorities to defer the move.

SMEs, commonly described as the most animated factor in the domestic national economy with the largest growth potential, are facing a bottleneck of narrow channel of funds placement. The establishment of the SMEs board will help solve this problem, and will be significantly important to the sustainable development of the national economy, according to the Shanghai Securities on May 18.

Cheng Siwei, vice-chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress said the developing strategy of China's secondary board would follow three steps: the first step is to open an SME board without lowering listing standards;

the second is to lower the standards and to make a step by step expansion of the board; the final step is to establish a complete and independent secondary board.

Wu Xiaohu, dean of the financial and securities research institute of Renmin University told *Securities Times* on May 18 that the establishment of the SME board would enrich the structure and the content of China's capital market and provide new investment opportunities to investors, especially individual investors. Meanwhile, it provides a market assessing mechanism for the growth-type SMEs.

Renowned economist Wu Jinglian told *Securities Times* that one of the reasons for the difficulties encountered in the industrialization of science-technology achievements is lack of both funds supply and innovative mechanisms. Establishment of the secondary board should overcome the difficulty.

Public Security Review

The number of criminal reports received by Beijing Police's 110 emergency hotline this week was on par with last week, with 251 criminal suspects apprehended after investigations. Street robberies saw a comparative decrease, while a rise in auto thefts and robberies was reported.

Break-ins mostly occurred at Jinsong and Xiaohongmen in Chaoyang, Chaoyangmen in Dongcheng, Taoranting and Guangnei in Xuanwu, Tiancun and Qinghe in Haidian, Dongghuashi in Chongwen and Fangzhuang in Fengtai at night and in the early morning.

Nanmofang and Balizhuang in Chaoyang, Dazhongsi in Haidian and Fangzhuang in Fengtai were the most common places for auto-related crimes, also mainly at night and in the early morning.

Robberies targeting taxi drivers at night have become the police's key target this week. Criminals frequently commit robberies in groups using weapons, taking the cars and also valuables. Taxis without legal licenses have been the main targets, and the outskirts of Chaoyang and Fengtai districts the most common places for the robberies to occur.

(Information from Beijing Public Security Bureau)

Chinese TV Makers Found Guilty of Dumping in US

By Sun Yongjian

The US International Trade Commission (ITC) made a final judgement on May 14 that Chinese TV makers had created a substantial hurt or posed a threat of substantial injury to the American TV industry.

The year-long process began on May 10 last year with a complaint from Five Rivers Electronic Innovations LLC, a television assembler based in Tennessee, which makes televisions for companies such as Samsung Corp, and two labour unions, according to *China Daily* reports. The company filed an anti-dumping suit with the US court against the Chinese TV exporters.

According to the final judgement of the US Commercial Ministry on April 13, Chinese TV exporters will face duties ranging from 4.35 to 78.45 percent, which means the US market will probably become unprofitable for Chinese enterprises, Shanghai Securities reported on May 15.

Mei Xinyu, researcher for the Ministry of Commerce told Shanghai Securities that the judgement by the ITC is unfair because it views China as a non-market economy.

The Chinese companies have denied the charges that they trade their televisions unfairly and said they sell at reasonable prices. The domestic TV makers involved in this case such as Changhong, Kongka and TCL told Shanghai Securities that they will file a suit to the US International Trade Court under the organization of the China Chamber of Commerce for the Import and Export of Machinery and Electronic Products.

Meanwhile, Chinese TV producers are considering ways of dealing with the current situation. Xu Zhizhong, the spokesman of Kongka group told *Yangzi Evening News* on May 10 that it had constructed a production base in Mexico which is expected to have a radiation effect on the whole north-American market.

But a spokesman from Sichuan Changhong, one of China's major TV makers, said it will join other TV makers to respond to this ruling. Shenzhen based Konka Group said it was shocked and indignant about the ruling, and is considering specific plans to counter the US panel's ruling. Both said they will not leave the US market or stop selling their products there, China Daily reported on May 17.

US Embassy Cancels Phone Visa Applications

By Cao Hao

The US Embassy in Beijing released a new schedule of visa application procedures Sunday, according to which applications will be accepted on a walk-in basis.

With the information call centre for US visas still closed as a result of allegations of illegal operations, the embassy and four consulates in China will accept applications from all comers, according to the embassy.

The call centre, which was in charge of scheduling visa appointments and providing general information to the public, ceased operations last month after the allegations surfaced about overcharging.

Consular sections in the embassy and US consulates general in China have been accepting and will continue to accept applications from those who already have scheduled appointments, and to process cases involving medical and humanitarian emergencies. Once scheduled appointments are exhausted, in an effort to maintain customer service to the extent possible, walk-in applications will be accepted from June 3 until further notice.



Bai Rongchun, deputy director of the Energy Bureau of the National Development and Reform Commission, said Wednesday that the construction of China's strategic oil storage bases has kicked off. It is predicted that construction of the four bases in Dalian, Huangdao, Zhenhai and Zhoushan will be completed by 2008. By 2015, the long term goal of the establishment of China's strategic oil storage reserve is expected to be implemented.

Photo by Photocom

Roche Donates Blood Glucose Meters to China

By Su Wei

Roche Diagnostics, one of the three major business arms of pharmaceutical behemoth Roche, announced Tuesday the donation of 10,000 blood glucose meters to selected hospitals in middle and small sized cities in China, through which the meters will be given to diabetes sufferers.

Pointing out that all selected hospitals are located in areas where blood glucose meters are not widely used, Felix Wang, head of Roche Diagnostics in charge of Chinese mainland and Hong Kong business, said he believes the donation will make a difference in the lives of the recipients.

The distribution of the meters will be conducted within one year, starting in the third quarter of 2004.

Roche Diagnostics also announced its partnership with Sanmina-SCI, a world leading electronics contract manufacturer headquartered in San Jose, California, to produce blood glucose meters in Shenzhen for the global market.

According to the World Health Organization, 177 million people around the world suffer from diabetes. The number is expected to double by 2030 if nothing is done to slow the epidemic. In 2003, there were nearly 21 million people with diabetes living in China.

Unilever Moves to Hefei

By Wu Xueying

Unilever's new industrial base in Hefei, Anhui Province, was opened to media for the first time last Friday. The base, which was relocated from Shanghai, will produce home and personal care product.

A second stage project is currently under construction and will go into operation at the end of this year.

A decline in profits on daily commodity items and fierce competition between international corporations and domestic enterprises were cited as reasons for the move.

Land and labor costs are significantly lower in Hefei than in Shanghai. Anhui Province is also offering Unilever a range of preferential items on tax.

BP Expands Presence

By Wu Xueying

BP Group declared last Saturday the official opening of Nansha Oil Depot, a joint venture with Guangzhou Development Industrial. The announcement came one day after BP signed a contract with China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) and Sinopec to construct 1,000 gas stations in Guangdong and Zhejiang provinces, *Beijing Youth Daily* reported on Sunday.

Located in the Panyu District of Guangzhou, Nansha Oil Depot represents a total investment of US \$86 million, is able to store about 0.36 million cubic meters of oil.

There are 14 large cities, 420 towns, and a population of more than 60 million in the Pearl Delta area. Average GDP area is twice the average of the whole Guangdong Province. Consumption of oil in Guangdong is reported to exceed 18 million tons per annum, 15 percent of the national consumption.

Foreign Enterprises Barred from Designing National Security and Disaster Related Projects

By Cao Hao

The Ministry of Construction announced on May 15 that foreign design enterprises are required to co-design construction projects based within the Chinese border with a Chinese firm. Moreover, foreign enterprises are forbidden to be involved in the design of high-security emergency and emergency rescue projects. The new regulation will take force from June 10.

According to the regulation, foreign enterprises that design construction projects in China must work with at least one Chinese design enterprise that has certification issued by the construction administration.

High-security emergency projects refer to research and construction projects relating to national security.

Philips Returns to Chinese Medical Market

By Sun Yongjian

Netherlands-based Philips Medical Systems declared at a press conference in Beijing Saturday that the company would return to the Chinese market.

Kang Youkun, CEO of Philips Medical Systems said at the press conference that the annual growth of Philips in the coming three years in the Chinese market is expected to surpass 10 percent, and that Philips considers China as one of its main markets.

In the 1980's, Philips established a joint-venture medical system company in Nanjing, Jiangsu Province, but withdrew several years later, citing immature conditions.

Kang predicted that the total scale of the Chinese medical market could reach around US 1.2 billion, while Chinese authorities' annual investment for the medical equipment increases at an annual rate of 13 percent.

Kang revealed that the company would not only provide CT, X-ray machines to China, but also focus on the emerging markets of Asia, South Africa, Eastern Europe.

Singapore Recognizes China's Full Market Economy Status

Singapore is to recognize the full market economy status of China, visiting Singaporean deputy prime minister Lee Hsien Loong said Friday.

Lee made the remarks during a meeting with Premier Wen Jiabao.

He said Singapore's decision was based on recognition of China's achievements in developing a market economy.

Wen said Singapore's decision to recognize China's full market economy status is a friendly action that is highly welcomed by the Chinese government.

(Xinhua)

City Invites Advice for Fostering Financial Industry

By Zhao Hongyi

What problems and issues are most worth attention as China's financial industry continues to post unprecedented growth? What role should Beijing play in the country's financial industry?

More than 400 guests from around the world gathered in the Great Hall of the People on May 19 to answer such questions and provide their observations, comments and suggestions at the 2004 Beijing International Finance Forum.

Chinese Vice Premier Huang Ju told the participants in the forum that China would quadruple its GDP by 2020. "A strong and dynamic financial industry is of critical importance and we welcome foreign financial institutions to bring new concepts, new products and new skills," Huang continued.

Wang Qishan, the mayor of

Beijing, expressed his beliefs that the 2008 Olympic Games would bring many business opportunities to the financial industry, as the city would be building tremendous amounts of sports facilities and residential housing.

Regarding the opening of renminbi business to foreign banks in Beijing by the end of the year, Mayor Wang said, "This will be a new beginning." He then welcomed several senior managers from world-renowned financial institutions to take the podium.

Jose Antonio Ocampo, UN under-secretary-general, reminded his audience that the development of the financial industry should ultimately help alleviate poverty and promote sustainable development.

Concerning Beijing's financial status, Li Yang, director of the Institute of Finance and Banking from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences,

said, "Beijing has policy information resources and is home to the headquarters of dozens of national financial institutions."

He added that Beijing's financial market was prospering, supporting the city's march towards becoming a domestic and international financial hub. The city established its first property transaction platform, the China Beijing Equity Exchange, last year.

Senior officials from financial regulatory organizations introduced the latest reforms of China's commercial banking industry and securities market.

Officials from the World Bank, International Monetary Fund and Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development. They provided views on the supervision and regulation of the financial industry to their Chinese counterparts.

At two forums on corporate

governance and risk management in the afternoon, William Rhodes, chairman of CitiBank, Robert A. Mundell, winner of a Nobel Prize for Economics, Ujie Junichi, chairman of Nomura Holdings, Kevan Watts, chairman of Merrill Lynch, Leon Brittan of UBS Warburg and David Eldon, chairman of HSBC, shared their experiences.

Last year, Beijing's GDP reached 361.19 billion yuan. Showing its place of paramount importance in the city's economy, revenues from the financial service sector hit 51.38 billion (\$6.2 billion), accounting for 14.2 percent of the city's GDP and 23.16 percent of the total income of the local service industry.

Wednesday's forum was organized by the municipal government along with the People's Bank of China, the CBRC, the CSRC and the China Insurance Regulatory Commission.



The forum was held at the Great Hall of the People on May 19.

Xinhua Photo



Managing the World of Risk

By Su Wei

Xiao Gang, Chairman and President, Bank of China:

When talking about risk management, first we look at a shareholder's risk performance, a basis for designing the bank's risk management strategy. We believe in the 'integrity-based steady growth' principle. Neither do we over-emphasize high returns nor do we pursue zero risk.

We, at Bank of China, should re-design our organizational structure and conduct business process reengineering to create a vertical and flat risk management system and ensure its independence and authority.

We will introduce more quantitative analytical tools and aggregate risk control and calculation. Plus, we should attract and retain risk management professionals.

Ujiie Junichi, Chairman, Nomura Holdings:

There are two kinds of lessons to be learned from Japan's non-performing loan (NPL) problems.

The first, regarding the disposal of existing NPLs, is that underestimation and procrastination of the problem will inevitably occur. One of the reasons the NPL problem was underestimated and put off was because neither bank managers nor regulatory authorities wanted to be held accountable. Steps must be taken to prevent underestimation.

The next task is implementing measures against new non-performing loans. That means dealing with them rapidly, which involves an increase in the reserves held at banks and the speed of NPL write-offs. Economic policies and measures to support corporate revival should be implemented in order to lessen the side effects of the drastic disposal of NPLs once the true extent of the problem has been grasped.

Ma Weihua, President and CEO, China Merchants Bank:

The sustained innovation and booming development of our retail banking business are primarily products of the accommodative policy and market environment.

We have been sticking to a 'customer demand oriented' service philosophy, consistently innovating our financial products. We also treat technology as a matter of vital importance and make full use of our information networks.

Andrew Crockett, President, JP Morgan Chase International:

A key element of risk management is to have the appropriate governance structure in place. There are three aspects of this that I would like to address: the need for multi-level oversight of risk, involving

the board, senior firm-wide management and various operating levels; the need for separation of function for risk-takers and risk monitors must have separate reporting lines, a method commonly known as the '4-eyes' approach; and the need for mutually reinforcing quantitative and qualitative tolls – for example, value at risk as a useful metric for assessing and comparing exposure under normal market conditions as well as stress tests used to simulate exposures under extraordinary conditions or in the absence of market liquidity.

Besides capital holding, which is a critical element of overall risk management, an appropriate sequencing of reforms is the key to achieving significant progress while minimizing the risk of setbacks including an early requirement to be put in place in the right legal infrastructure and to enhance the transparency of financial reporting.



Nobel Prize-winning economist Robert A. Mundell strongly opposes a strong US dollar and revaluation of the renminbi.

Xinhua Photo

Zhu Li, President, Galaxy Securities:

At present, China does not have the objective conditions to issue general obligation bonds on a large scale. This is because the issuance of such bonds has to meet the following requirements: local governments having considerable financial autonomy; independent financial revenues capable of taking responsibility for their economic behaviors; municipal bonds being given clear-cut legal status; adequate information disclosure; and fiscal transparency among local governments.

With the money shortage in the process of urbanization bringing about sufficient supply of municipal bonds, and huge savings providing great potential for demand for municipal bonds, the development of the bond market in China, focusing on revenue bonds, can be promoted. That will take defending the legal status of municipal bonds, constructing effective legislative and administrative systems for municipal bonds, adopting market-oriented operations in the municipal bonds market and launching a second market for municipal bonds so as to increase liquidity.



City Gets Financial Marks

By Sun Yongjian

John Hunkin, president and CEO, Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce:

Beijing may become not only headquarters to China's great banks, some of them emerging as strong global players in their own right, but also to some smaller financial institutions, predominantly Chinese-owned. They can effectively be part of larger alliances in which they can offer products developed elsewhere and draw on distant balance sheets, credit risk analysis, research and development, technology, people and marketing.

Technological change has and will continue to allow innovation in the remote delivery of financial institutions, and here a modern and highly innovative high-tech city like Beijing, with its large number of research institutions and its famous Zhongguancun, should be able to play an increasingly important role in the provision of innovative financial products to customers across China, and even beyond China's borders.

David Eldon, chairman, Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corp.; director, HSBC Holding:

London, as an international financial center, has a lot of valuable experiences from which other cities can learn.

At first, as a financial center, a sound financial system should be needed, which means foreign banks can compete with local banks under equal conditions. Secondly, as for any cities that are going to become financial centers, strong supervision and infrastructure are necessary. Thirdly, talented people such as lawyers, accountants and all sorts of bankers are essential for financial centers. Fourthly, flexibility and adaptability are required for financial centers.



Perfecting Corporate Governance

By Sun Yongjian

Banking sector

Zhou Xiaochuan, chairman, People's Bank of China:

The difficulties the Big Four domestic banks are facing in financial reform are very similar with what state-owned enterprises have encountered. 1997's nationwide financial working conference demanded the stop of all sorts of administrative intervention, the reform of the financial system and the establishment of a strong leadership style. We should absorb experiences and lessons from state-owned enterprise reforms and transform the state-owned banks into public holding listed companies.

The nationwide financial working conference of 2002 defined the reforming orientation of the state-owned commercial banks, requiring that state-owned commercial banks be transformed into state-held shareholding commercial banks under the principle of clarifying rights and responsibilities, and finally the establishment of listed companies on the base of the establishment of corporate governance structure.

Zhang Enzhao, president, China Construction Bank:

A critical feature of modern corporate governance is three primary conflicts between shareholders and managers: potential conflicts of interest; asymmetrical information; and the mismatch of risks and accountabilities.

Compared with state-of-the-art commercial banks, problems existing in the corporate governance of China's state-owned banks are shown in some of their drawbacks. There does not seem to be one tangible, ultimate owner of these banks. State-owned banks lack effective, market-oriented and transparent mechanisms to select and monitor managers and staff. And there are no well-designed and market-oriented incentive, check and balance systems in these banks.

Capital market

Shang Fulin, chairman, China Securities Regulatory Commission:

We should promote the coordinated development of the financial market by means of the innovation of the financial system and establish an integrated financial market system with high transparency and efficiency and

safe operation. We should adjust the market sources for transaction, registration and settlement systems in order to establish an integrated securities market and promote coordinated development among sub-markets.

Alexander Schaub, head of internal market department, European Commission:

Good corporate governance plays an essential role in channeling savings into productive investment. Making this link between corporate governance, investment and economic growth and development illustrates the importance of corporate governance for market economies and business competitiveness.

Four approaches are needed in establishing the framework for corporate governance: ensuring transparency throughout capital markets and loyal and competent financial intermediaries; facilitating the development of sound mechanisms for internal controls; ensuring effective external control mechanisms; and encouraging international cooperation.

Insurance sector

Li Kemu, vice chairman, China Insurance Regulatory Commission:

Improving the corporate governance of insurance companies includes four points: first, we should optimize equity structure; second, we need to emphasize the establishment of boards of directors; third, we should improve companies' inner control and balance systems; and fourth, we need to strengthen supervision of corporate governance.

Wang Xianzhang, president, China Life Insurance (Group):

China is implementing separate operations in its financial sectors, with each sector regulated by a relevant commission. However, with the establishment of the socialist market economy in the past ten years and the speed-up of financial development, the conditions and environment have gradually developed for diversified operation in China's insurance industry.

Diversified operation of large insurance groups is not only a must, but also feasible. After many years of development, China's major insurance companies have developed very influential brands and achieved sound credit.



Confidence in China's Stock Market



By Zhao Hongyi

Sir Leon Brittan is the executive chairman of the UBS Warburg investment bank. Before taking that post, he served at the EU Commission in Brussels for 10 years, including three years as EU Trade Commissioner. He joined UBS Warburg in April, 2000.

Mr. Brittan talked to *Beijing Today* via email last week through UBS Warburg's Hong Kong Office.

BT: Your bank was one of the first five qualified foreign institutional investors (QFIIs) approved by the Chinese government to invest in China's stock and bond markets. But recent reports indicate UBS is planning to postpone investing in China. Does that mean UBS is not sufficiently confident in this country?

LB: UBS is proud of being one of the first five QFIIs licensed so far by Beijing on May 27 last year. We used up the \$300 million quota last October and increased the quota by an additional \$300 million. We used up the second quota recently and are now applying for a third increase.

Today, UBS is the largest QFII in China. QFII status has posed a potentially huge opportunity for international investors to participate in China's A-share market. We have strong confidence in the prospects of China's stock markets in the long term.

BT: What do you consider the basic criteria for the development of the financial industry?

LB: Let's look at the successful story of the EU. A unified and internally free market is very important. What the government can do is to introduce a framework and legal system. What's left is for the market, because market forces can dictate which business should develop.

The second is a fair and transparent environment for competition. Competition can raise efficiency and bring benefits to consumers.

Admittedly, with the global and European financial markets becoming increasingly integrated, competition in the European financial market will be more intense and tougher.

BT: What do you think of the triangular financial relations between Hong Kong, Shanghai and Beijing?

LB: There can be several financial centers in a unified market, like in Europe. But the core element in this approach is that the authorities should not impose a top-down model of how the market and players should function and develop.



Navigating China's Banking Industry



By Zhao Hongyi

William Rhodes, senior vice chairman of CitiGroup and chairman of CitiBank, spoke to *Beijing Today* before delivering a speech at the forum entitled "Improving Corporate Governance and Enhancing Core Competition Power". Below are edited versions of the interview.

BT: Citibank has been aggressively expanding its business in China. Can you introduce some of your company's latest developments in this country?

WR: We have just started preparations for credit card business with Shanghai Pudong Development Bank. We opened a fifth branch in China in Tianjin. We are looking for a second branch in Shanghai and Beijing for consumer banking services. We are also looking for the license for renminbi business in Beijing where we have stayed for two years. But all these ambitions need approval from the Chinese government.

BT: According to recent reports, CitiBank will acquire shares in a Chinese bank after doing so in Shanghai Pudong Development Bank. Can you confirm those reports?

WR: Yes. CitiBank and HSBC are all looking for appropriate domestic partners. We have investment banking services and card businesses here in China. The next target is consumer services. I can only say that we'll inform you when the time arrives.

BT: Please elaborate on the contents of the speech you will give this afternoon.

WR: I want to remind China's financial industry of the issues of brands, bad loans, recapitalization, currency reserves and risk culture.

Regarding 'risk culture', I want to say that we should not allow bad loans to fluctuate, where one bad loan is solved and another new one emerges. Internal management and sincerity is very important to solve this problem, particularly among senior staff.



Opening Market Shows Great Potential

By Zhao Hongyi

Wang Yanxiu, deputy director-general for banking supervision of the China Banking Regulatory Commission (CBRC) spoke to *Beijing Today* last Friday in Beijing regarding the process of opening the domestic banking industry after China's accession to the World Trade Organization and other topics.

Mr. Wang's department supervises the business of foreign banks, policy banks and postal saving institutions in China and handles financial market accession negotiations with the WTO.

BT: Please describe the latest developments of overseas financial institutions in China following the country's WTO entry at the end of 2001.

Wang: By the end of March, 195 overseas financial institutions were operating in China. This includes 158 branches and 13 sub-branches of foreign banks, 15 financial corporations and 9 affiliates. Eighty-eight

institutions have obtained licenses to conduct renminbi business in this country, while 12 have obtained online business licenses, five have obtained QFII status and one has obtained a license for state bond brokering.

BT: What kinds of businesses are overseas financial institutions operating in China?

Wang: Overseas banks can sell more than 100 financial products under 12 categories in China. These products cover the fields of foreign currency services, renminbi services, local individual services and corporate services.

In addition, some of these institutions have released 10 special financial service products in China with the approval of the CBRC. These include on-line banking, QFII, state bond brokering, corporate cash management, individual cash management and financial derivatives.

BT: Are overseas financial insti-



Challenges Remain for Chinese Economy Growth



By Su Wei

José Antonio Ocampo, under-secretary-general of the United Nations, spoke to domestic media during the Beijing International Financial Forum at the Great Hall of People on Wednesday.

BT: What do you think about the Chinese economy and its role in the world economy?

Ocampo: There are several economic centers in the world. Like the United States, China is one of these centers. So the stability of the Chinese economy and the growth of Chinese economy are important to the world.

The timing of this forum is that China is taking reforms in financial structure. The ability of the Chinese financial system to transform is crucial to its fast economic growth.

However, we cannot say how fast that economic growth should be and how fast the growth is. But the economic growth must be sustainable. Efforts are being made by the world as a whole to cool down the world economy in order to achieve sustainable growth.

BT: Will China's adopting a cooling-down economic policy impact the world capital market?

Ocampo: The world capital market will not be affected by China's economy being cooled down. Instead the capital market is more affected by the United States, especially the US's increases in its interest rate. But changes in China's exports will affect the world economy.

BT: What do you foresee in the future for the Chinese economy?

Ocampo: There is no doubt that the Chinese economy will continue to grow fast as guaranteed by the high investment in China.

But there are two challenges. One is that China needs to strengthen its financial sector, which continues to be weak, especially in terms of non-performance loans. The other is the challenge of transformation to a real economy.



Lessons for Reducing Risk

By Su Wei

Richard E. Hecklinger, deputy secretary-general of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) talked to *Beijing Today* by email about global financial and capital markets before the Beijing International Financial Forum held Wednesday at the Great Hall of the People.

BT: What is the OECD's analysis of the current state of financial markets, both on a global level and in China?

Hecklinger: Overall, we are cautiously optimistic about the state of global financial markets despite recent corrections in bond and equity markets. The correction mainly reflects growing confidence that the risk of deflation has diminished and that the global recovery is sustainable. On balance, asset valuations are now closer to those justified by fundamentals than in the recent past. Equity premiums and credit spreads had become very narrow.

However, there are considerable regional differences and some uncertainties. The US economy looks to be on track for above-potential growth rates into 2005. In Europe, growth is expected to pick up, but remains more muted than in the United States. Japan is showing signs of emerging from deflation. Against this background, the recent OECD Economic Outlook warns that one of the remaining risks is that some regions of the world could well experience some overheating, due to very easy credit conditions and ongoing tax cuts or government spending, while some other areas may remain in a 'low-activity-low confidence trap.'

Concerning China's financial markets, the major state-owned banks face well-known problems related to balance sheet quality, with large volumes of non-performing loans; the ownership and governance systems of banks still need basic reforms. In the capital market, state-owned enterprises account for the overwhelming share of listed companies, even though the private sector has shown far



greater dynamism. Also, the capital market is characterized, as in many other countries, by volatility that appears to be excessive given developments in the corporate sector and the economy as a whole.

BT: What suggestions would the OECD make for measures to prevent financial crisis?

Hecklinger: The approach to preventing crisis depends upon the state of each country's financial markets. Not every country has pursued sufficiently deep reforms to prevent future crises. Many emerging markets in particular still have banking systems with many fragile institutions. In these cases, rehabilitation of the domestic banking system and upgrading of domestic bank supervision should be the highest priority. We believe that the best way for any country to minimize its vulnerability to crisis is to apply international norms and best practices as adapted to its domestic market.

BT: Does the OECD favor a unified world financial system as a corollary of the trend towards economic globalization?

Hecklinger: The OECD generally believes that globalization is a positive force in the world economy and thus favors removal of restrictions to capital movements and to the activities of foreign financial institutions. We observe that the world financial system has already achieved a high degree of integration. Major financial institutions are present in the principal markets worldwide. Most sophisticated investors distribute their assets across multi-currency global portfolios, and capital now flows across borders at an unprecedented rate. We believe that the process of liberalization should be accompanied by efforts to improve the risk management capability of each institution and to upgrade financial supervision in line with international norms.

BT: The OECD recently revised its Principles of Corporate Governance. In the wake of recent corporate collapses, what is the OECD's assessment of the state of corporate governance in the world's major economies and in China?

Hecklinger: China appears to increasingly appreciate the value of good corporate governance, recognizing that Chinese companies will need to observe good corporate governance standards in order to implement plans for corporate reform and to obtain access to capital on world markets. The Chinese authorities have recently launched a policy dialogue with OECD countries to work towards improving corporate governance, including the governance of state-owned enterprises.

Olympic Torch Beijing Relay Rescheduled

By Hou Mingxin

The Beijing leg of the world-wide Athens Olympic torch relay has been rescheduled to one day later from the original date of June 8, to avoid collision with the national collegiate entrance exams.

The Beijing Organizing Committee for the Games of the

XXIX Olympiad (BOCOG) announced on Wednesday that a total of 148 torch bearers will carry the torch through Beijing on June 9. The torch arrives in the Chinese capital on June 8, the fifth stop of the first truly global relay in Olympic history.

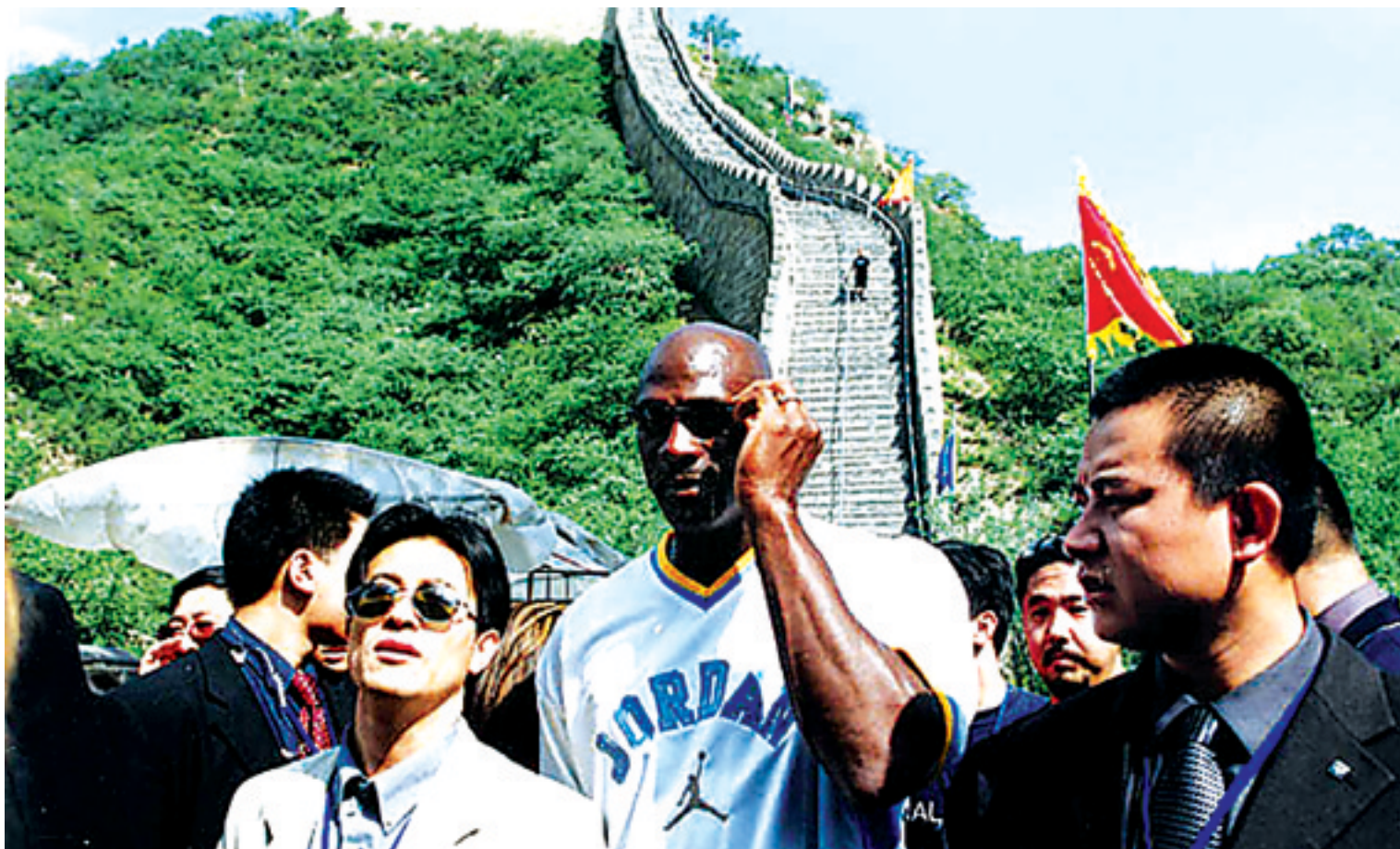
According to the schedule, at 9

am on June 9, the first torchbearer will start the relay from the north gate of the Great Hall of the People in Tian'anmen Square.

The torch will then pass along a well-planned route, which includes three urban and two suburban districts of the Chinese capital to showcase its resplen-

dent culture and charm.

Along the 55km route, the Olympic torch will travel past a host of symbolic sites such as the Temple of Heaven, the Central Business District (CBD) and traditional hutong residential areas, before reaching the destination of the Summer Palace at 6 pm.



Lucky fans met the basketball legend on Wednesday afternoon when he visited the Great Wall.

Photo by Wei Tong

Jordan Fans Storm the Flower Beds

By Zhang Jianzhong

NBA superstar Michael Jordan caused a predictable flurry of excitement when he arrived in Beijing on a private plane Monday night to start his four-city Asian tour this week.

He was supposed to appear at the donating ceremony for the rebuilding of the Beijing Dongdan Sports Center on Wednesday.

A large number of his fans crowded the site by early morning. Lots of them were middle school students holding huge Jordan posters. Some stood out-

side the stadium and climbed up anywhere they could to get a clear view of Jordan.

As early as 7 am Wednesday, three hours before Jordan's scheduled arrival, the centre's basketball courts were surrounded by hundreds of young people.

"I'm here to see him, the basketball god in my heart," said a 14-year-old fan wearing the jersey with the legendary No 23. "It's worth getting up at five in the morning to see him just once."

More fans than expected showed up for the event, destroy-

ing flowerbeds and damaging a car. So police decided to pull the plug, with authorities saying they feared potential disorder. The police said they had to cancel the event for security reasons.

"We have to ensure the security of all these fans," said a police official. "Nobody knows what will happen if Jordan shows up here." But the fans were deeply upset.

Since arriving in Beijing, Jordan has kept his schedule in China a secret to avoid too much of a scramble from the media and fans. Most people have only seen

him on CCTV news when he met with Yuan Weimin, director of the State General Administration of Sports, on Wednesday. This was far from their hopes of seeing or even meeting Jordan themselves.

A few lucky fans saw the basketball legend on Wednesday afternoon when he visited the Great Wall.

"This is the happiest moment of my life," said an excited fan.

Jordan's Asian tour continues to Hong Kong and Taiwan on May 21 and 22 before concluding in Tokyo on May 23.

Tian'anmen Peaches?

By Zhou Ying

A local company has raised a storm of controversy by registering to use Tian'anmen as the brand name for organic peaches and other fruit. The China Patent and Trademark Office accepted Beijing Huabang Food Co.'s application on Monday and is conducting related investigations, but the legality and appropriateness of the brand name have already become subjects of widespread public debate.

Beijing Huabang applied for permission to put the Tian'anmen brand name on its new line of fresh organic fruits, including peaches, grapes and Chinese gooseberries.

An unnamed employee of the trademark office told *Beijing Youth Daily* on Tuesday that it was the first time any company had registered to put the hallowed name on commercial products. "However, research of the Trademark Law of the People's Republic of China has shown that the name does not constitute a legal violation, so we accepted the case."

Beijing Huabang owns extensive orchards in Beijing's Pinggu District for growing organic peaches, meaning they are raised without the use of pesticides, fertilizers or other artificial additives. Zhang Aiguo, manager of the company's marketing department, told *Beijing Today* on Wednesday that Huabang has long made a commitment to providing chemical-free fruits

and other products to consumers.

The first crop of Tian'anmen brand peaches could hit the market in June.

"I don't think it is improper to apply for 'Tian'anmen' as trademark. The best quality peaches deserves the best trademark. Moreover, if Zhongnanhai, Zhonghua, and the Great Hall of the People can be the brand names of tobacco products, what's wrong with using Tian'anmen?" Zhang added.

Yet there could be serious legal hurdles before Huabang's move. According to Trademark Law of the People's Republic of China, "Those [trademarks] identical with or similar to the national name, national flag, national emblem, military flag or medals of the People's Republic of China, as well as those identical with the names and designs of the symbol buildings of the places where the central government agencies are located may not be used as trademarks."

"The success of the application mainly depends on whether the authorities define Tian'anmen as symbolic," said Xiong Ying, an associate professor of civil and commercial law from Beijing Industry and Commerce University. "Zhongnanhai, Zhonghua, and the Great Hall of the People were registered before the Trademark Law was modified, so I think this application is not likely to get passed."

International Charity Bazaar

By Zhou Ying

Hundreds of foreign embassy staff, their family members and other kindhearted people assembled at the garden of Kunlun Hotel on Saturday to take part in the 2004 International Charity Bazaar, organized by the Arabian Ambassadors Association.

The activity raised the tidy sum of 60,000 yuan, which will all be donated to schools and handicapped children in depressed areas of western China. Mrs. Nehad R. Sukayri, the president of the Arabian Ambassadors Association, said that the main aim of the Charity Bazaar is to help young people in need in China.



Photo by Wang Zhenlong

Watch Out for that Bicycle

By Zhang Nan

On Tuesday morning, 14 foreign students from Canada and Singapore took their driving tests at the vehicle administration center of Beijing Traffic Management Bureau.

This examination was different from written examinations of the past in that it was taken on computers for the first time, and eight

kinds of languages were provided for the examinees to choose from – there used to be just three.

Unfortunately, only seven of the examinees passed the test. They will now be able to add a shiny new People's Republic of China driving license to those from their own countries, and this one's probably cheaper, costing just 5 yuan.

Boy Shot Dead After Hostage Standoff



After shooting the suspect, the police carried the injured girl to an ambulance.

Photo by Lou Qiyong

By Wang Xiaoxiao

A boy of about 18 years old died after being shot by policemen in Maliandao Neighborhood, Xuanwu District on Tuesday this week. He'd injured three people and was holding one girl hostage in a room under a bicycle shed when the police caught up with him. After an hour of negotiation, the police decided to shoot him as they were worried he was going to hurt the hostage. The three people and the hostage were treated for their injuries and are recovering.

Fruit vendor Zhang Jiansheng was the first witness. "It was about 5:20 pm when the boy came over to me and asked me how much for the watermelons," he recalled. "He suddenly grabbed my knife and went over to a girl who was buying an ice-cream." A harsh scream was soon heard as the boy tried to drag the girl off with him. Hearing the girl's cries, policemen in the nearby police station immediately rushed out. The boy cut the girl

on the neck, but then he dropped her and ran off into another living area as the police gave chase. He hurt two other people with the knife – a middle-aged man got a cut on the back and a woman took a blow to her left shoulder.

Seeing the policemen getting nearer, the boy panicked, rushing into a room under a bicycle shed in front of the Maliandao Dongjie Building 3. Inside the room a young girl was guarding the bicycles. The boy grabbed her and put the knife to her neck as the police came in. It was 5:40. A young man who worked in the neighboring restaurant said he heard the police talking to the boy. He told *Beijing Today* he could tell the boy was pretty nervous from his trembling voice. The boy told the police that he was a high school student and couldn't earn much money despite doing a hard part-time job. Police tried to persuade him to drop the knife. The boy refused. At 7:12pm, the waiter heard the sound of two gun shots. The girl was soon carried out by a policeman and taken to Xuanwu Hospital. "I saw blood on her neck," a witness told *Beijing Today*. The boy was taken to a nearby hospital as well but died from his injuries.

Fortunately, the four injured people were all safe. Now, police are looking into this matter, trying to confirm the identification of the boy.



By Xiao Shan

The first US-style rodeo in China was staged in Beijing Wildlife Park last Friday, the Chinese wild horses and bulls giving the experienced US cowboys quite a test and greatly exciting the 5,000-strong audience.

Located in Yufa Town, Daxing County, Beijing Wildlife Park has a floor space of 20,000 square meters and 7,000 seats, and it opened to visitors last Saturday. The performances will run from 2:30 to 4:30 pm every day with an admission fee of 160 yuan.

Beijing Wildlife Park had planned to build a Spanish bullfight court before May 1, but the media and the public soon started paying attention to the cruelty of the Spanish spectacle, which involves "matadors" plunging knives and swords into the bull. Following a spate of negative publicity, Daxing District government announced late March that it would shelve the bullfight plan and introduce a rodeo performance instead. This less bloodthirsty US sport offers points to the cowboys if they're able to avoid being

thrown from the backs of the bulls or horses for at least eight seconds.

During last Friday's debut performance, US cowboys aimed to show their horsemanship skills, and Chinese wild horses from Shandan, Gansu Province offered a suitable test. They threw the cowboys to the ground pretty fast the first six times. However, the wild bulls from Fufeng County, Shaanxi Province turned out to be a milder ride as they were more easily tamed by the cowboys.

Photo by Zhang Bin

American Observation Group Visits CBEX

By Zhang Jianzhong

30 EMBA (Executive Master of Business Administration) students of North Carolina State University came and visited the China-Beijing Equity Exchange (CBEX) on Saturday, and took part in an informal discussion on China's equity & assets transactions at CBEX.

The 30 EMBA students were all from world-famous enterprises like IBM, Fibers Business Group, Voyageur Asset Management, RBC Centura Bank, GlaxoSmithKline, and Schenectady

International Inc. They were suitably impressed.

"CBEX has such professional financial services and a strong staff team," said Clinton Park, vice president of RBC Centura Bank, after his visit.

CBEX is a comprehensive equity transaction platform authorized by the Beijing Municipal Government after the restructuring of the former Beijing Equity & Assets Exchange (BEAE) and China-Zhongguancun Technology & Equity Exchange (CTEE). It is one of the first trial equity trans-

action platforms authorized by the State Owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission of the State Council for the transfer of ownership of state owned enterprises.



Photo by Lou Qiyong







Beijing Zoo Relocation Rumor Sparks Debate

China's oldest zoo may be about to move to the outskirts

By Shan Jinliang

Since February, a rumor has been growing that Beijing Zoo is going to be relocated to the city's rural outskirts. From the Internet, the story spread to the national mass media and the city government finally admitted on May 10 that experts are indeed conducting research into the zoo's relocation. The result will be released soon.

Guo Baodong, director of the Commission Office of Daxing District has presented a proposal to the Beijing Municipal Congress to move Beijing Zoo to Daxing District, north of Beijing. Guo explained the benefits of his plan, saying the SARS virus and the bird flu outbreaks in Beijing and around China have aroused deep concern about people and animals living in close proximity. He suggested the zoo's current location in the populous Xizhimen area posed a threat to the city's



Off to the suburbs?

Photos by Photocore

public health, as well as increasing traffic pressure.

Zoo industry experts have refuted Guo's claim, and said that Daxing District's only concern is one of economics. They said Beijing Wildlife Park has received few visitors since being established in Daxing, so the lo-

cal government's proposal is intended to bring success to Beijing Wildlife Park by moving the zoo close by. Others have suggested that the primary motivation behind the relocation plan is real estate developers hoping to build new blocks in Xizhimen.

Beijing Zoo would not be the

first one in China to be moved from a city center to the outskirts. Recent statistics from the China Zoos' Association show that at least 16 city zoos are being moved under the guideline of "Making space for urban construction," including Shenyang Zoo, Xi'an Zoo and Shijiazhuang Zoo.

Beijing Zoo is one of the largest in the world in terms of overall space, and its area has been largely unchanged since it was built in 1906. Many local people have developed an affection for it and are angry at the prospect of its relocation. They feel it has historical and cultural value, and has become part of their lives. Others feel it would be good for the animals to be further away from such a densely populated area, not just for public health reasons but also because it might offer the animals a more peaceful environment.

Beijing Municipal Develop-

ment and Reform Commission told the press on May 10 that the relocation has to be agreed to by the majority of the public. Three areas in Beijing's rural outskirts, Daxing, Yanqing and Shunyi, are hoping to provide a new home for the zoo. The commission added that the government has organized an experts' panel to examine the various proposals, and the result will be released soon.

Does Beijing Zoo pose a threat to public health?

Hou Baokun, head of Wildlife Protection of Beijing Municipal Bureau of Forestry

The SARS virus and bird flu might be spread from animals to humans, even though scientists are undecided on this issue. We have to take public health issues seriously, regarding the zoo's relocation.

Zhang Li, China representative of World Wildlife Foundation

Animals in the zoo have been there for many years, and they are unlikely to infect people with diseases. The zoo would be more concerned that visitors might spread diseases to the animals.

Luyiner, a netizen at www.green-web.org

If Beijing Zoo moves away, the city of Beijing will lose a green area of land which has existed for around 100 years, and an environmental education base. Migrant birds will lose a resting site, and birds in the city will lose a beautiful meeting place.

Qiu Feng, a commentator with Guangzhou-based Southern Metropolitan Daily

Officials in favor of moving Beijing Zoo know the public would not be happy to see the zoo move away, but they still support the idea. In the view of the officials, what are such objections compared with economic interests? They can count how much land the relocation would bring to the city's construction industry and the other economic benefits. However, they cannot calculate how much the citizens lose in terms of their enjoyment of the zoo. So they pretend to ignore this issue.

Should the zoo be in the city center?

Hou Baokun

Beijing Zoo used to be in the outskirts, but with the expansion of the urban area, the zoo is now part of the city center. There are very few zoos in city centers around the world.

Fang Zhenning, an architecture critic in Beijing

Shanghai builds its zoo in its city center, and it is surrounded by a science museum, an art university and an art gallery, which are two minutes away from the zoo. It regards the zoo as a cultural facility. With its halls and pavilions, the Beijing Zoo environment provides a home for some ancient buildings. When the zoo is moved away, these protected ancient buildings will be surrounded by commercial plazas and residential buildings, and their entire cultural value will be ruined.

Will the relocation benefit the animals in the zoo?

Hou Baokun

If the zoo is moved to rural areas, the animals will be able to enter the wildlife park and have more space to roam. Wildlife protection will be a major benefit from this plan. On the other hand, the removal of Beijing Zoo means the city center will lose a green oasis and a top tourist destination. Children of the city will also have a journey of a few hours if they want to see the rare animals.

Yinyue Zashi Dongwu, a netizen

It is too noisy in the city, so I think it is a good idea to move Beijing Zoo to the distant rural areas. It would help the animals. In any case, is it good for people to regard rare animals as friends or pets?

Hu Enhua, a citizen in Beijing

With careful state level breeding and kind visitors, animals are better cared for in the zoo than they are in the Daxing Beijing Wildlife Park, which is also facing financial difficulty. If Beijing Zoo moves to Daxing, the fate of Beijing Zoo will be the same as that of the Wildlife Park.

Mr. Chu, a professor of wildlife protection with the Chinese Academy of Forestry

It is questionable for the whole nation to be moving its zoos out of city areas. There are a lot of children and students in the city, and the city zoos have a good function in environmental education. When city zoos are moved to the suburbs, people will have to pay a high traffic cost and admission fee, both of which are bad for environmental education.

It is not easy to move such a big zoo. If the local managers do not pay attention to the zoo construction, it will just be a bigger cage for the animals.

A member of Friends of Nature, a non-governmental environmental organization in Beijing

I want to ask if the relocation will benefit or harm the interests of the residents. I think it harms the interests of the animals. With fewer visitors and no guaranteed funds, the interests of the animals cannot be ensured.

By Zhou Ying

Parents whose children suffer from leukemia face a terrible dilemma: a choice between saving their children and spending all their money, even mounting up massive debts.

More than 20,000 people are diagnosed with leukemia every year, mostly young people. However only 10 percent of infected children have families who can afford the full course of medical treatment.

In fact, leukemia is not an incurable disease. According to Zheng Huyong, a doctor at Beijing Children's hospital, 70 percent of infected children contract acute lymphoid leukemia, which can be cured after two to three year's treatment. "But in our hospital, the percentage that abandon the treatment immediately after being diagnosed is 50, and nearly 20 percent of the rest give up halfway. The only reason is the cost of the treatment." Families can pay in excess of 200,000 yuan to cover a full course of medical treatment.

Obviously, most families simply don't have the money, and they won't be covered by insurance. So what can be done?

The Youth Loan Society appeared to be a template for the rest of the country when it was launched in Shanghai in 1991. However 13 years later, it is still the only loan society of its kind. According to the local authorities, more than 95% of students under 18 years old in Shanghai have joined the loan society, and at least 500,000 children have received financial assistance, totaling more than 300 million yuan.

In Shanghai, students who join the loan society should pay a premium of around 30 yuan per year. If they are diagnosed with a serious disease, they can get financial assistance of up to 80,000 yuan per year.

The Beijing Red Cross Youth Loan Society is expected to be launched in Beijing next year, so at least China's capital will start to follow Shanghai's lead.

Some people believe such loan societies can play an important role in helping children with leukemia. But others complain that it's far from addressing the roots of the problem.

Yang Zhenfu, a 41-year old farmer whose only daughter was diagnosed with leukemia this year

We have to pay at least 200,000 yuan for the treatment, but our annual revenue is less than 10,000 yuan. If we can not collect enough money by the end of this month, we will have to take our daughter back to Anhui province.

Our 14-year old daughter started feeling dizzy at the beginning of this year, so we took her to the hospital. The examination found she had leukemia.

Who Will Help the Children?



The result was a heavy blow for the whole family.

We have paid nearly 50,000 yuan since we arrived in Beijing. That's about what we've saved in the last ten years. But it is far from enough. The doctor told us that we have to spend 200,000 yuan to save our daughter. It's nearly impossible for us to collect that amount of money.

We have sought help from the local authorities, but without success. I really want to pay for the treatment, but I don't know if we'll be able to.

Yu Ping, a news analyst from Beijing News

The insurance companies exclude people with chronic lymphoid leukemia, because the treatment period can be as long as three years.

In my opinion, hospitals and insurance companies do not have an obligation to cover the treatment costs for children, because both of them assume sole responsibility for their profits or losses.

Instead, the government, as the eternal shelter for citizens, should take responsibility for leukemia patients. However, owing to the lack of effective mechanisms, such responsibility has not yet been fulfilled. Therefore millions of children face death from leukemia. It is a tragedy for them to be isolated from the national medical care system.

The key to solving the problem depends on whether the government pays enough attention to this case and whether they decide to take the initiative, such as launching a simi-

lar loan society. In that case, as long as a family pays a certain amount of money every year, they will receive a large amount of money to cope with diseases such as leukemia.

The government could also negotiate with insurance companies. It could require national insurance companies to launch a scheme to cover serious diseases. Therefore the high risk could be diluted among a number of companies.

In addition, the government could decrease taxes on medicine and medical equipment used for treating leukemia. Such a policy could greatly ease the financial implications of the treatment for families.

Tao Keqiang, a journalist with Huang Gang newspaper in Hubei province

If a loan society can have such success in Shanghai, then it could in other cities too, especially Beijing. It is really good news for both patients and families about the new youth loan society, especially for poor families.

Life is precious and short. We should treasure it and pay attention to our health. It is said that people cannot choose their origin; also people cannot choose their disease.

Our government is the people's government. Government officials should adhere to the policy of "working for people, thinking about people and benefiting people." I really hope that youth loan societies can become common around the country, because it is the best way to show

our respect for young patients.

Luo Yunbo, dean of the food department of China Agricultural University

I support the idea of setting up these loan societies. It is really a good way to solve the problem. There is a graduate student in our department who was diagnosed with leukemia two months ago. In order to fund her treatment, we passed the hat round and collected about 140,000 yuan to help her, but it's still just half the money she needs.

Actually, helping people in need cannot merely depend on charity activities. I think we should take precautions before things happen. The establishment of a youth loan society provides a governmental organization to help young patients. But many young people do not have much knowledge of insurance; they always think they are too young to have a life-threatening disease.

The media should publicize loan societies, in order to let more and more people know about the concept.

Yu Ruiling, general secretary of the Red Cross in Beijing

If everything goes smoothly, the youth loan society can be formally put into practice this year.

The government has said there should be different channels to establish social security. If it's possible, the new company can also provide social security. The Red Cross is a charitable organization, so the youth loan society is not about profit. The main difference between

our loan society and an insurance company is that children who already suffer from a serious disease can join our society.

Our market investigation showed that expenditure on medical treatment in Beijing is higher than in Shanghai, so we expect to ask for a fee of 50 yuan per year. I think most families can afford to pay that.

Whether our loan society can be a success depends on the number of participants. We may change the sum according to the market.

I hope every child can join the society. As long as you pay the money, you may be able to save a child's life.

Ralph Jennings, an American teacher from Beijing Broadcasting Institute

American families handle paying for healthcare in different ways.

An unemployed family usually qualifies for some kind of government aid for medical expenses, although the exact amount varies from state to state.

A family in which the parents have part-time jobs will try to borrow money, from a bank or from friends, to pay the bills. Families with full-time jobs usually have medical insurance, so they pay relatively little out of their own pockets.

But some families choose not to seek treatment for fatal diseases. They believe prolonging the child's life by a few months will only hurt everyone more, and cost more. It's sad, but sometimes true.

By Li Song / Dong Nan

DINK, which means “double income and no kids”, has become a new lifestyle of choice for young couples in big cities. DINK families have been growing steadily in numbers since the 1980s, and now there are at least 600,000 DINK couples in China, mainly in big cities such as Beijing, Shanghai, Tianjin and Guangzhou. In Beijing, about 10% of young married couples say they do not intend to have children.

A recent survey by horizonkey.com found that since 1997, the number of couples in Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and Wuhan choosing to have children has fallen by 11.3%, while people aiming for DINK status increased by 1.1% to 10.51%.

Besides, most DINK couples have higher income. Among couples whose total monthly income was more than 5,000 yuan, 13.7% of them had opted for a DINK family unit. But among couples whose total monthly income was less than 1,500 yuan, the number was just 5.5%.

I want to be free!

Why do more and more couples choose not to have children? Many old people think that it is to have more freedom. They regard this as an “irresponsible” choice.

“I know they have free choice, but if every family does not bear children, the human race would become extinct,” said Hou Yuchuan, a retired middle school teacher. “Most adults received love and care from their parents. I think it is rather selfish if they do not then bear children and pay out the same love and care their parents gave them.”

However, couples have their own reasons for wanting to be DINK families.

“I think a child is a little ‘destroyer’ of the love between a couple,” said Zhang, a woman in her twenties, to xinhua.net. “Life for my husband and I is easy and romantic. If we had a child it would spoil everything.”

“We enjoy traveling, taking photos, reading books, taking exercise and enjoying all the delicious foods in Beijing, so having a baby is not in our plans,” said a couple who have been married for seven years and did not wish to reveal their names. “Since life is short, we’d like to use all our money and time to enjoy life itself. Obviously, that would be impossible if we had a child.”

But not all DINK families

Doing the DINK



have such hedonistic attitudes. Zhou, who lives in Chaoyang and has been married for three years, also believes that a child might ruin his marital harmony, but in a different way.

“My wife and I often overhear our neighbors — a young couple as well — quarrelling with each other on the issue of how to educate their son. Therefore we worry that if we had a child, the same thing would happen.”

Many women worry about the course of gestation and giving birth. “Gestation takes almost ten months. How many ‘ten months’ does one have in one’s life? What a waste. Not to mention the care a child needs in the future,” said Wu, who gave birth to a child at the end of last year. “I would rather not have had this child, but my husband insisted,” she said.

“It must be painful,” said Lin Yehua, a university student. “Though medicine has developed greatly, I know women still die during child birth. Besides, giving birth will damage a woman’s figure.”

Pressures and competition at work is another factor. Shanshan, a government official who is in her twenties, has been married for four years to a company manager. She said that she loved children very much, but that she and her husband were so busy that they were unable to take the idea into consideration.

“In fact, I love children, and I wish to have one,” said Zhou, a 32-year-old secretary, “but the competition in our company is intense. If I have a child and leave my position temporarily, someone else is sure to take my place.”

Many couples also worry that they cannot afford to have a child. “The cost of educating a child is too high in Beijing,” said Guo Jin, a woman in her thirties who has been married for six years. “When I was in college, the tuition used to be cheap — hundreds of yuan every year. But now, to send your child to a decent kindergarten takes tens of thousands of yuan, and the key primary or high schools and colleges are even more expensive.”

“Besides, books, clothes and toys for children are becoming more and more expensive. If other children have those luxuries but my child does not, I am afraid that he or she would complain about it and develop an inferiority complex. They might even resent us,” said Guo, who admits that for these reasons she does not want to have a child.

The difficulties of life, and the troubles all children must

face, also scare many couples. “I feel afraid every year when I see college graduates fighting so hard to find a job. In the future, this kind of competition will get more and more cruel. I have had enough of all this and I do not want to bring a life into the world just for it to suffer like me,” said Yan, who got married last month.

“I would feel distressed if I saw my child having to do everything to suit society,” said Zhang, who lives in Wangfujing. “In fact, I love children, and I think I can afford to have one. But I simply do not want to bring one into this world, with its jungle law.”

And there are some couples who do not have enough confidence in their marriage. “I do not believe in romantic love and pledges,” said Li, 35. “If I divorced my husband, the child would be hurt. We do not have the right to heap our fault on an innocent child.”

Troubles and worries

However, the cost of freedom for DINK families is another set of pressures and worries.

Many think that the DINK idea is bad for the stability of a marriage. “I was married for six years, but it all came to nothing in the end,” said Wu. “I used to think that marriage without a child was free and easy, but I never thought that it would lead my marriage into a tomb.”

At the beginning, after getting married, Wu was afraid that having a baby would change her figure and bring a premature end to her sweet married life, so having a child was put to one side. Though her mother-in-law was unhappy about it, Wu’s husband indulged her. Wu became pregnant twice but both times the couple decided on an abortion.

Time passed and eventually the couple decided they were ready to have a child. However, the medical examination found that the two abortions had damaged Wu’s reproductive system, and there was no hope for a pregnancy. Her husband and her mother-in-law couldn’t accept it, and blamed her for her selfishness. The quarrel in the family raged on, and Wu’s husband divorced her in the end.

Sun, a chief editor of a newspaper in Beijing, says he believes that the passion between men and women cannot last for long, but that a child can bind a couple together, and the relationship can be saved by the effort of raising a child.

“In real life, many families without love are saved by their children. Though a child cannot guarantee a stable marriage, families without children face more serious tests,” he said.

Moreover, understanding and support from a DINK couple’s parents is also important.

Zhou, A company manager told xinhua.net his story:

“I have been married for eight years. We have both been devoted to our work and do not want to have a child. Our parents understood that. However, after several years, my parents’ feelings changed. Since my business succeeded, they thought it was time for us to have a baby. I agreed with that, because putting more time into a child would be a good thing! But my wife disagreed. And I failed to persuade her. So I asked for a divorce. She relented and agreed to have a child. But she was already 38 — too late to have a child.”

“My parents dreamed of a grandchild all the time but I disappointed them,” said Zhao, a man in his thirties. “My father and mother-in-law also complained about it, so home life was sometimes hard. In fact, I understand them.”

Some scientific reports have shown that women who forego child birth might be denying themselves significant health benefits. Research has found that giving birth can help women’s immunity and reduce the risk of diseases such as breast cancer.

More tolerance

Though they face troubles and social pressure, DINK families are getting more understanding from society these days.

Renowned Renmin University sociologist Li Yinhe believes that the increasing numbers of DINK families shows there’s more room for Chinese people to choose their life.

“People who choose not to have children pay more attention to present happiness. They cherish their relationship with their spouse more than parenthood,” said Li.

“Many think that DINK couples are not responsible or kind-hearted, but I do not think so,” said Yang Zhonghong, a university professor, to xinhua.net. “Everyone has the right to choose their way of life. Others may not agree with their choices, but the right of choice should be respected. A civilized and mature society should tolerate and understand diversification.”

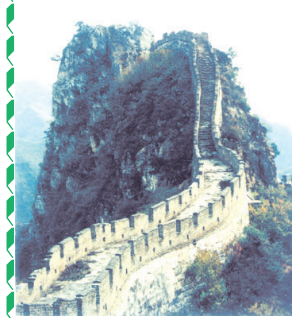
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By Yi Yi

At a small campus barber-shop in the Central University for Nationalities last Friday afternoon, Wang Weijun cried as he had a haircut. It was just an ordinary haircut for the barber, but Wang had been waiting for this day for five years.

Wang used to live a contented life, with a loving wife, a son and a steady income from his job as a trucker to support his family. But bad fortune caught hold of the family when Wang's wife Jin Shuangying gave birth to a baby girl on August 1 1997 at Kangtai Hospital in Xingtai. Three days later on August 4, Jin was given a blood transfusion. In April 1999, she was diagnosed as HIV positive by Beijing Ditan Hospital, and she died of AIDS one month later on May 16. Soon after, their daughter Wang Kaijia was also confirmed as HIV positive. Wang vowed not to cut his hair or his beard until he got justice for his family.

Unexpectedly, despite the apparently open and shut nature of Wang's case, it took him five years to get the verdict he wanted.

On April 29, Hebei Provincial Higher People's Court awarded Wang compensation of 362,042 yuan. "I am not satisfied, but I have to accept it," he said

Liu Wei, Wang's attorney, from the Women's Research and Service Center of Peking University's Law School, also found it a bittersweet conclusion to five years of legal wrangling. "It's satisfying that the sentence verifies that the hospital is responsible for Jin's death and Wang Kaijia's health. But I felt some regret over the sum of the compensation awarded." Wang's lawyers had initially sought compensation of over 15 million yuan, based on the cost of medical treatment for HIV-patients to sustain a life up to the age of 73. "The financial compensation the court decided on will not be enough to ensure Wang Kaijia's continuous treatment," Liu told *Beijing Today*

Waiting for Justice



Wang Weijun and his daughter

Photo by Ni Huachu

on Wednesday. As for the significance of the verdict, Liu said she hoped it would lead to a law being drafted and implemented to protect people who become infected by AIDS from blood transfusions.

The verdict was enough for Wang to feel the time had come to cut his hair. "The hair is of great significance to me. I'll take it to my wife's tomb and burn it or bury it nearby. I want her to know that I got some justice for her."

His daughter, witnessing her father's haircut, commented simply, "Dad has had long hair as long as I can remember. I think he looked better with the long hair; the new hair style is not as good."

A difficult battle

After her blood transfusion, Jin Shuangying left the hospital for home on the afternoon of August 4, 1997. However, soon after that she began to suffer from symptoms such as high fever and oral ulcers, and medication didn't help. Two years later, Handan Central Hospital had her blood tested in Beijing, and confirmed that she had had AIDS.

The Wu'an Sanitary Quarantine Station traced the case and reported that Jin had been infected through blood transfusion. Shahe Sanitary Bureau testified that the privately-owned Kangtai Hospital where Jin gave birth hadn't used blood from the reg-

ular blood station. Instead, they had illegally collected blood privately to cut costs.

"It was all for money," Wang told *Beijing Today*. "If the hospital gets their blood from the regular blood station, they only make ten yuan from a 400cc blood transfusion when they charge patients for it. However, if they collect blood by themselves, they pay the donor about 180 yuan, and sell it to the patient at 460 yuan. The hospital can make nearly 300 yuan from a 400cc blood transfusion." The hospital denied the charge, but it also destroyed all its blood donation and transfusion records from before June 1999.

One of the reasons for the marathon lawsuit, according to Wang, was the power of the defendant. The dean of the hospital, Wang Shunying, has a brother working as director of the general office of Hebei Provincial Party Committee. Her sister-in-law was the mayor of Xingtai city in 2000 when Wang filed the lawsuit, and her other sister is the mayor in charge of sanitary issues in Shahe.

When the first hearing was held in October 2001, Wang went to the court to hear the verdict. Someone from the court told him that the defendant had shouted abuse in the courtroom, didn't wait to hear the verdict and filed an appeal on the spot.

"Many people tried to persuade me to give up," Wang told *Beijing Today*. "But my home was destroyed, what did I have to lose?"

Many people wrote letters to encourage Wang, and many donated money to help him. Wang says that the extensive media coverage of his case was also vital. "If it hadn't been for the media coverage, I don't think I could have got this result."

"My heart is bitter mixed with happiness," Wang continued. "I met so many kind-hearted people and that's valuable to me, so I felt this five-year wait has been worthwhile, even if I failed in the lawsuit. There is righteousness after all."

Daughter

Wang Kaijia has to take DDI and AZT (HIV medication for children) every day. But a professor named Cao in Beijing volunteered to pay for Kaijia's medication and he has been donating 300 yuan per month for Kaijia's living expenses since

last year. Kaijia has to take a blood test every three months, and her blood test last time after the Spring Festival was in the normal scale. She looks just like other girls, of course, though she suffers from colds and fevers more frequently. Apart from her health, the thing that depresses Wang the most is the bias society exerts on himself and little Kaijia. It's time for her to go to primary school in September. Her experience at the kindergarten was not too promising. She has to sit alone in the last row of the classroom, and she has often come back home in tears. "I can't blame the teacher for isolating her, because they have to take care of other children too," said Wang. Though he was diagnosed as HIV negative, he still feels there is strong discrimination towards him. All his old buddies now only nod to say hello when bumping into each other in the street. "It's impossible for me to dine, drink, play poker or chat freely with them as I used to. I don't feel comfortable to do so." However, leaving home for another place to start over is not realistic either. "I also have a 15-year-old son. He lives with my father. He's in the first year of junior high school. I barely have time to look after him. He doesn't do so well at school, and is very thin."

Future

Wang, well-spoken and clear-minded, demonstrated an intellect beyond what you might imagine from his junior high school education. Asked what he wanted to do now since he has won the case, Wang said his priority was to get the compensation as soon as possible to make sure Jiajia has the money for her medication. "Through all these years, I've gained a certain amount of knowledge about the law. If any of my fellow countrymen, either AIDS or HIV-patients, need any legal assistance, I would like to help them solving basic law questions." Meanwhile, Wang has participated in Ai Zhi Xing Health Education Institute, a non governmental organization that offers AIDS-related assistance and information in Beijing. Wan Yanhai, a well-known anti-AIDS campaign activist and initiator of the organization, has invited Wang to join them. He will be equipped with a computer back home. When he is familiarized with the computer, he will be able to work for the organization via the internet.

But the compensation is the main thing for Wang. Attorney Liu Wei has drafted an appeal for compulsory enforcement of the judgment, to ensure Wang doesn't have to wait as long for his compensation as he did for the verdict.

Timeline of Wang Weijun's case

August 2000, Wang Weijun files the lawsuit against the hospital. The Women's Research and Service Center of Peking University's Law School offer their legal assistance for free.

October 18, December 11, 2000 and May 18, 2001, Xingtai Municipal Intermediate People's Court hold three sessions concerning the case.

October 15, 2001, Xingtai Municipal Intermediate People's Court reaches the first verdict, ordering Kangtai Hospital to pay Wang 362,000 yuan for medical treatment damages.

Both parties appeal against the sentence.

August 5, 2003, Hebei Provincial Higher People's Court decide to withdraw the first sentence, and return the case for retrial.

September 23, 2003, Xingtai Municipal Intermediate People's Court hold a session.

December 26, 2003, Xingtai Municipal Intermediate People's Court reach the verdict that compensation of 362,042 yuan (including 100,000 yuan for damages) should be paid to the plaintiff. Both parties again appeal against the sentence.

April 29, 2004, Hebei Provincial Higher People's Court reach the final adjudication and overrule the defendant's appeals. The hospital is also ordered to pay the expenses for the second trial.

By Wang Fang

Nine people have died since last week from drinking poisoned alcohol in Guangzhou, capital of Guangdong. Another 33 people are in hospital and 10 of them are in critical condition. The local investigation found that the suspects in the case had blended industrial alcohol, which contains lethal methanol, with real alcohol and sold it in bulk to local markets and stalls.

Cheap booze

Liu Kanshan, in his forties, was the first reported victim in the case. He was taken to Guangzhou No. 12 People's Hospital on May 10. Liu is from Hunan and was doing odd jobs in Baiyun District in Guangzhou. On the evening of May 9, he bought one jin (500 g) of alcohol from a stall near Zhougluotan Central Market and drank almost half of it. The next morning, his limbs were sore and his eyesight was blurred. He was immediately taken to hospital. His blood test later showed that the methanol in his blood far exceeded the safe level. Liu is out of danger now but it is still difficult to determine whether he will recover without suffering any side effects.

His wife, who was sitting at the side of the bed, told Xinhua, "We haven't found any fixed jobs in Guangzhou yet and have had to make a living through odd jobs. Now my husband is sick because of the poisoned alcohol."

But Liu was lucky. On the evening of May 11, Duan Dongshu, a local villager from Meitian Village, Zhouluotan Town, Baiyun District died after drinking the same bulk-sold alcohol, bought by his wife. In the same evening, a worker from Hunan also died from drinking the alcohol.

"I've been working in this hospital for 20 years but I've never seen such a serious methanol poisoning incident in Guangzhou," Jiang Chaoqiang, president of Guangzhou No. 12 People's Hospital, told Xinhua. He said methanol poisoning can be fatal, causing serious damage to the liver and kidneys, and can lead to blindness and other maladies.

Poisoned Alcohol in Guangdong Kills Nine

After hearing about the first victim, the local authorities rapidly confiscated 94.72 tons of distilled alcohol and carried out an investigation into the source from which the alcohol was being sold to local distributors. Police have detained twelve suspects and two more are at large. Five alcohol workshops without official operating licenses have been closed.

How was the poisoned alcohol sold in the market?

Methanol is clear transparent liquid. Consumption of 0.3-1 grams can be fatal. So how did the suspects drink methanol in such large quantities and how was such poisoned alcohol sold on the market?

The investigation found that the poisoned alcohol was mainly produced in Zhongluotan Town and Taihe Town in Baiyun District, Guangzhou. Among the 14 suspects, nine are from Guangxi and one is from Jiangxi. The industrial alcohol they used was bought in other provinces and brought into Guangzhou.

According to Chen Shuxin, the vice-director of Guangzhou Quality and Technical Supervision Bureau, the huge profits and low cost of producing alcohol in this way are too tempting to resist.

Chen said that under standard circumstances the profit from selling rice alcohol in bulk was quite low. One jin of rice can produce 1.5 jin of alcohol. The price of the rice is 1.3 yuan per jin and that of the alcohol is 1.5 yuan per jin, allowing for a fairly trivial profit, which cannot satisfy the alcohol producers. However, blending industrial alcohol with the brew helps cut costs significantly.

The suspects even set up their alcohol workshops next to public toilets. According to *Guangzhou Ribao*, staff from Guangzhou Quality and Technical Supervision Bureau found a bulk alcohol workshop in Haizhu District, which did not have a manufac-



Don't drink this stuff

turing license or a hygiene certificate. In this 30 square meter room, the jars of alcohol were all over the place and it was wet and dim inside. Moreover, the alcohol production line was just over the sewer of a public toilet. The owner, who is from Guangxi said that the alcohol produced here was mainly sold to nearby residents at 4 yuan per jin. He said he could sell about 15 kilograms everyday.

The investigation also found that most of the alcohol producers, sellers and consumers did not know what methanol was, or even that it was dangerous.

The staff in Guangzhou Industry and Commerce Bureau told Guangzhou Ribao that it was easy for alcohol producers to buy chemicals such as methanol. On May 14, they found that Guangzhou Baichun (Chemical) Co., Ltd. and other companies began to sell industrial alcohol without acquiring the necessary manufacturing license and some of the companies could not provide any sales invoices. In addition, these companies did not establish a sales registration system for the chemicals, as required by the state. A methanol producer who had been selling 1,600 kilograms of methanol every day said, "I sell to anyone who pays me money."

Gao Zhizhong, chief of the Su-

pervision of Dangerous Chemicals Section of Guangzhou Safety Supervision Bureau, said that companies dealing with dangerous chemicals are assessed by the safety supervision departments after they obtain approval and a manufacturing license. But until April 2004, only 150 companies out of the total number of 3,784 companies selling dangerous chemicals had got manufacturing licenses.

The regulation on alcohol sales in Guangdong which was approved in 1998 states that companies engaged in alcohol production can only obtain a business license after getting a hygiene certificate and the specific manufacturing license for producing alcohol. However, the recent investigation found that some of the alcohol producing workshops in Guangzhou already had a business license despite not having any of the other licenses.

Vulnerable drinkers

Liu Kanshan, another victim of the poison alcohol, said, "I almost died. I will quit drinking after leaving the hospital!" However, his wife was skeptical about this resolution. She said she once warned him of the danger of poisoned alcohol but he paid no attention. Liu drinks at least one and a half jin of alcohol every day, but can only afford bulk-sold alcohol as the bottled

stuff is too expensive. Liu and his wife's concerns are shared by many other people who live on a low income.

Many consumers in this poisoned alcohol incident are farmers who work in Guangzhou. They do not have enough money to buy brand-name alcohol so they buy it from illegal markets. Secondly, their background of living in rural areas means many of them are not aware of their legal rights, should they suffer poisoning by illegal alcohol.

Chen Shuxin, the vice-director of Guangzhou Quality and Technical Supervision Bureau, said they had hired more than 1,000 people to assist the government in cracking down on fake products. He remarked that since these people were quite familiar with the situations in their communities, they could find out the producers of the fake products swiftly.

A number of experts also suggest that the key point in cracking down on fake products is to set up a high threshold for the producers as well as a complete system of quality standards from the purchasing of the materials to the products' processing. Otherwise, the suspects who sell poisoned alcohol in bulk today will sell it in bottles tomorrow.

Feeling better

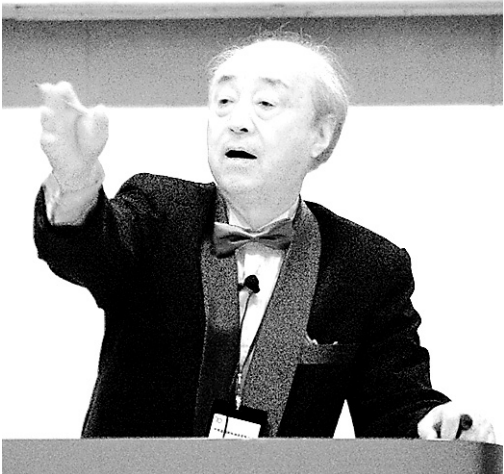
On the morning of May 19, 2004, five victims appeared to have recovered and will be discharged from hospital soon. As the designated hospital to treat the victims in the poisoned alcohol incident, Guangzhou No. 12 People's Hospital has received 40 patients. Apart from one fatality, the rest are gradually recovering.

However, according to *New Express*, a Guangzhou based newspaper, 273 kilograms of the poisoned alcohol is still unaccounted for. The vice-mayor of Guangzhou, Wang Xiaoling, promised that they would trace the flow of the poisoned alcohol by every means available.



in the Voice

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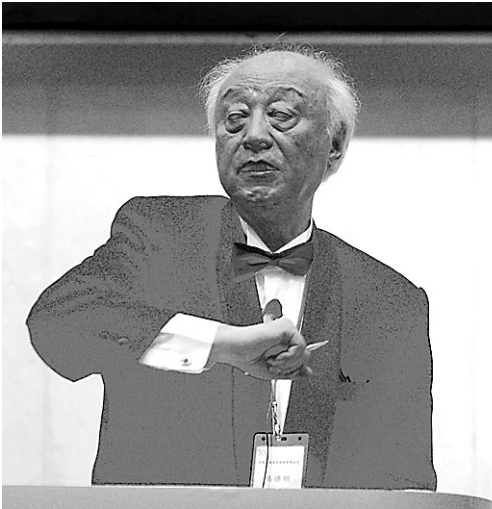
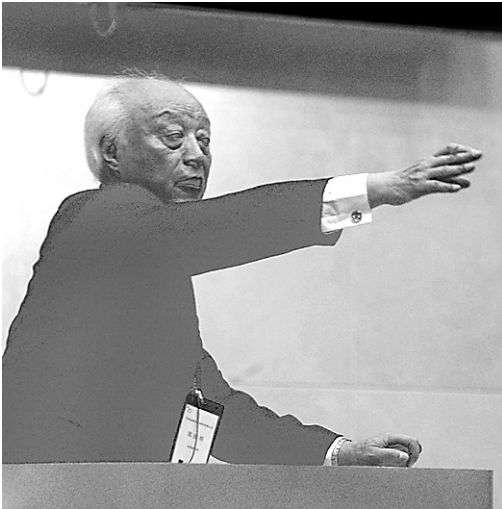


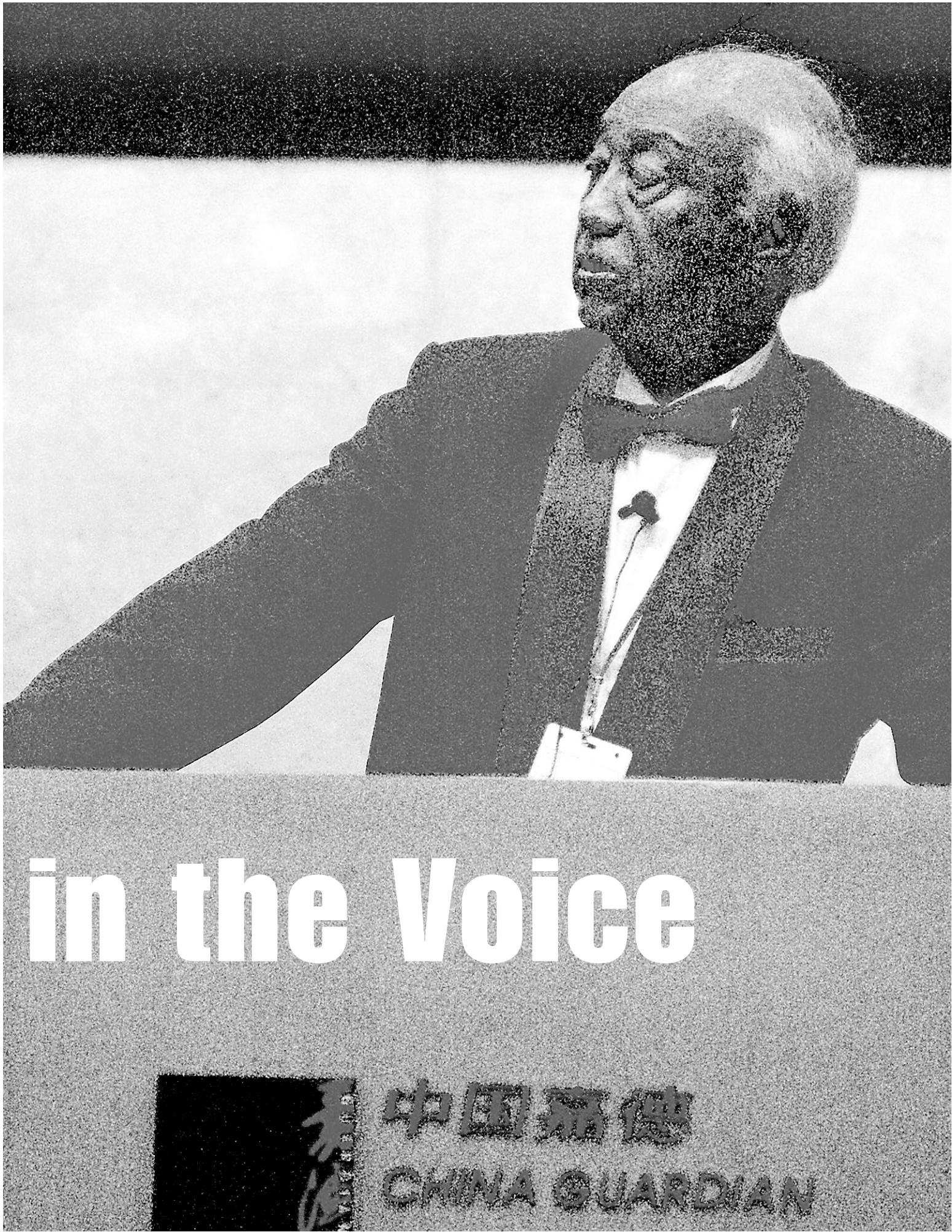
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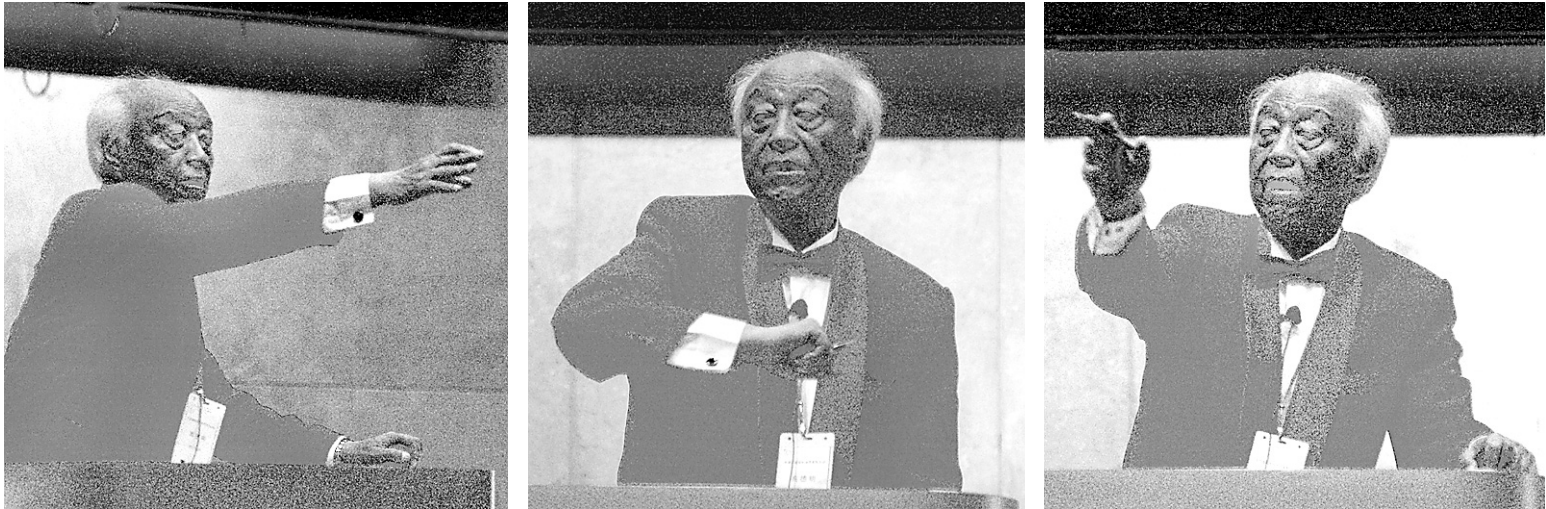
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All in the Voice



By Guo Yuandan

Gao Deming, 70, is the oldest auctioneer in China. But his days of calling the prices and wielding the gavel are not through yet. His warm, authoritative tones have contributed to some of the country's most successful auctions over the last ten years. "Many people have told me my voice is clear and appealing," he says.

A different challenge

"Becoming an auctioneer was an accident for me," says Gao. When China Guardian Auctions, the first officially approved shareholding auction company dealing in works of art, was set up in 1993, they began setting up their auction team. Gao had retired four years earlier in 1989 as vice president of the Beijing Chemical Industry Research Institute. "I just had dinner with the China Guardian people, and they said okay. In fact, I had no experience in auctions at all," he recalls. "But I accepted their offer immediately. For me, entering into a totally unknown field is a rare chance to explore something new in life."

Chen Dongsheng, founder and the then president of China Guardian recalled that he made the decision almost at the first sight of Gao. "His white hair, firm eyes and clear voice impressed me very much. He also looked very well mannered, confident and reliable. He was just the kind of auctioneer I had in mind."

After accepting the new challenge, Gao became a frequent visitor to the China National Library over the next three months, in order to study Auction Law and all the other kinds of legal information he needed to know about. Long before the first auction, Gao had engraved it all in his mind. But it was still a nerve-racking occasion.

"My first auction was held in Beijing on March 27, 1994. It lasted the whole morning and the trade volume reached over 14 million yuan. I was a little nervous at the beginning," Gao says. "The air in the overcrowded sales room was tense and hot. Restless applause rose from the audience from time to time when a big deal was done. When the auction was over, I found my shirt totally soaked with sweat." For seven hours, Gao's constant banging of his new hammer sealed more than 400 deals, 72 percent of the total items on sale. Gao's genteel bearing and reassuring manner helped in this great success for the company.

And this was only the beginning.

In 1995, a pair of palace lanterns hung at Tian'anmen Gate on October 1, 1949 fetched a price of 13.5 million yuan. In 1996, *Ode to Fair Ladies (Li Ren Xing)*, an ink and color painting by Fu Baoshi, set China's record for a work by a contemporary Chinese painter when Gao sold it for 10.78 million yuan. The painting *Sketches of Rare Birds (Xiesheng Zhenqin Tu)* by Emperor Huizong of the Song Dynasty went for 23 million yuan in 2002.

While many people regard the auctioneer as having the leading role in the auction, Gao points out that the backroom staff play a huge role in preparing, researching and valuing the items for sale. "But the auctioneer is undoubtedly the focal point," he says. "I must watch every change in every corner and exchange with the buyers." Usually, hundreds of works are auctioned in just a few hours, so the auctioneer must control the time.

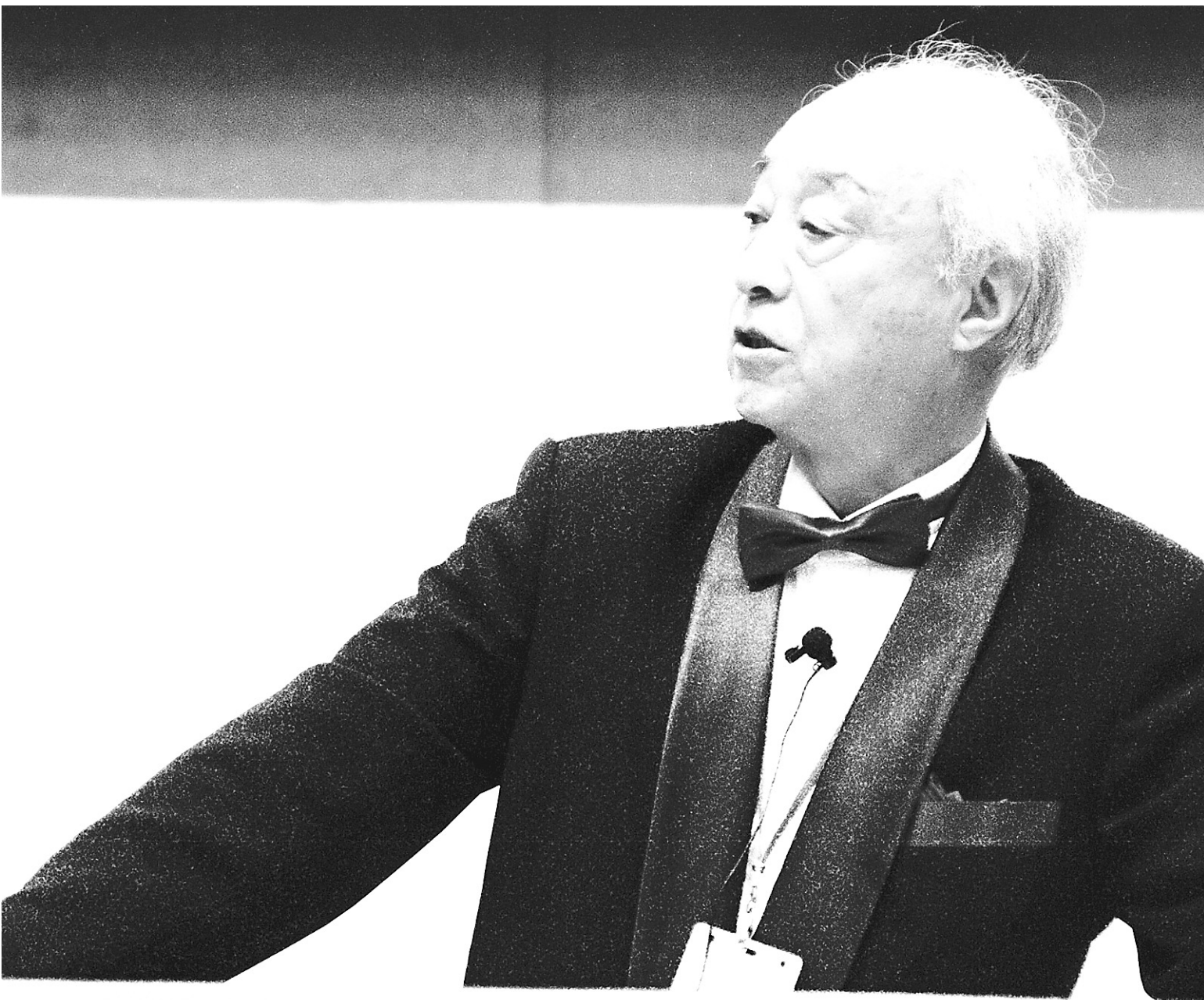
Before every auction, information is collected on the objects on sale as well as on similar items all over the country. Photos are taken and media publicity is another important task. "What I do is familiarize myself with every object. There are many trivial details, but learning them is the most effective way of avoiding making mistakes," says Gao.

Gao got the first auctioneer certificate in China, and became chief auctioneer for China Guardian. "Being an auctioneer is my favorite career. I am the oldest in my company, but I am more energetic than many younger people. However, every auction for me is a challenge. So my unusual experiences in my earlier years have helped me."

Hard times

"I had a happy life up to the age of about 20," says Gao. "My father was one of the revolutionaries along with Sun Yat-Sen, and my mother majored in children's psychology. They

"The air in the overcrowded sales room was tense and hot. Restless applause rose from the audience from time to time when a big deal was done. When the auction was over, I found my shirt totally soaked with sweat."



Gao Deming at China Guardian's 2004 spring auction at Kunlun Hotel on May 16.

Photos by Bao Wei



provided me with a very comfortable environment. I was able to play freely instead of having to do piles of homework like my granddaughter. I went to a missionary school in Suzhou. The model of its education encouraged students' self-development; we weren't merely required to get high scores, but everyone was excellent. At that time I was a member of the school chorus, and I joined the boy scouts, learning to be independent. Two American women taught us English, which helped me later," Gao says.

Gao graduated in 1954 from Zhejiang University with a degree in Chemistry. He was assigned to Beijing Chemical Industry Research Institute. Soon, however, he found himself the target of successive campaigns in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Because Gao had studied at missionary school, which was organized by Americans, he was considered tainted by capitalist imperialism.

First he was caught in the "anti-rightist" campaign which began in 1957. When the "Great Leap Forward" was initiated in 1958, Gao, as a "rightist," was sent to

prison. "At the beginning, I was simple and hoped to work hard. I wasn't involved in politics. The library in my institute had the latest books from all over the world. I often helped the assistant, so they agreed to lend me 10 more books than usual.

Unexpectedly, Gao's love of reading was soon used against him. "They said I stole the extra books from the library. I was insulted because I am a Christian and my beliefs prohibit lying or theft. I felt like a different species." Then followed the years of Cultural Revolution, Gao's father died during that time and Gao spent three years working in a coal mine in Pingyao, Shanxi Province. Afterwards he did various jobs, including teaching, until returning to Beijing in 1979.

But these experiences were valuable, Gao believes. "I had a chance to understand real life in the countryside. I made different kinds of friends. And at the same time there were some simple joys amidst the bitterness. We once stole some watermelons, which we had not been allowed to eat even though we planted them. It was partly

because I was a husband and father of two sons. We had to survive. At that time it was a struggle to survive, not yielding to fate. I just accepted it, instead of trying to escape. Many people couldn't bear the suffering, either physical or mental, and committed suicide. I told myself that continuing was a kind of success."

A happy old bird

When Gao came back to Beijing in 1979, he worked initially as a policeman, before returning to the Beijing Chemical Industry Research Institute as vice president. "There were seven vice presidents. I couldn't do what I wanted to do, and I wouldn't do what others wanted me to do. So I retired early," Gao says. "Many people thought I was different. Actually I just wanted to be useful. When I pass away, I want people to remember something I did."

Gao decided to shift his interest from chemical reform to environment protection. So when an American Company dedicated to environmental rehabilitation came to China in 1994, Gao's English-speaking ability enabled him to become deputy

representative of the company's Beijing liaison office. When reading *China Daily*, Gao used to circle lots of new words on the front page. Gradually, as his new job required him to use more English, he found that he was circling fewer and fewer words. Now, at auctions, Gao's fluent English is often remarked on by impressed customers.

"Society is always changing. I must study continuously. Now I read lots of news everyday. I also deal with business by email, which saves a lot of time. The Internet is not only for young people," he says.

Gao has a happy home life with his wife whom he has known since they were both teenagers. "We love each other. When I was in jail, I advised her to divorce me, but she didn't agree. All that time I was away from her, she had a difficult life with two children."

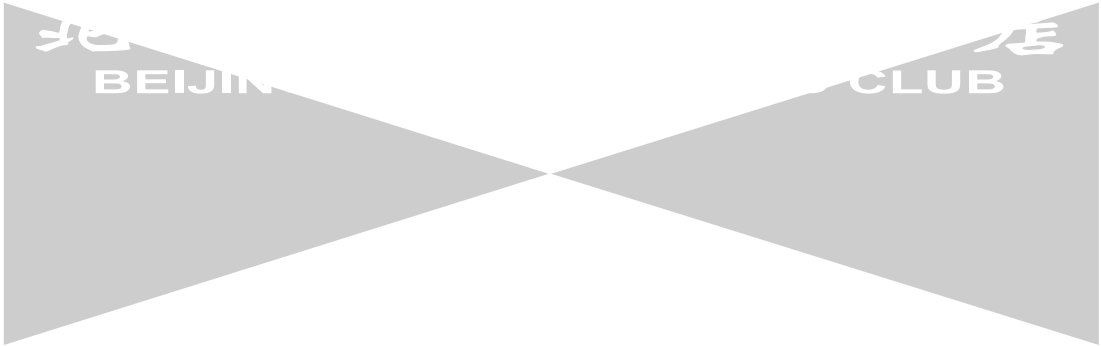
"I am an optimist," says Gao. "I never look to the past, only forward to the future. I believe tomorrow is another day and I must grasp every minute. Only God may know if I will be getting up tomorrow morning so when one days ends, I can sleep immediately, with no regrets."



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By Sheng Mingming

Tibetan opera, or ace lhamo, is an ancient art form often described as "the living fossil of traditional Tibetan culture." It boasts a history of more than 600 years, predating Peking Opera by 400 years.

The Tibetan people have long cherished this important art of their folk culture and it has become part of whom they are. Indeed, wherever you find Tibetan people, you find Tibetan opera.

Living Fossil of Tibetan Culture

According to legend, in the 14th century, a high-ranking monk and bridge builder named Drupthok Thangthong Gyalpo decided to build iron bridges across all the major rivers in Tibet to improve transportation and facilitate the making of pilgrimages.

To fund the project, he formed a singing and dancing troupe composed of seven beauties who danced while he played the cymbals and drums. They performed throughout Tibet to raise money to fund the bridge building. This is said to be how Tibetan opera came into being.

Ace lhamo means literally, "Fairy Sisters." Thangthong Gyalpo himself is considered the father of Tibetan Opera. A performance is always preceded by the blessing of a statue of Thangtong Gyalpo, and it usually ends with the presentation of hada (a strip of raw silk or linen for ritual greetings) to the statue by the performers and the audience.

From ritual dance to cultural synthesis

In fact the origins of Tibetan opera might extend back a millennium, to Tibetan ritual dances and early Indian Buddhist drama. Buddhist teachings and Tibetan history are the sources of Tibetan opera's inspiration, which is actu-



The role of all the performers can be clearly identified from the mask each one wears.

ally a synthesis of Han and Indian culture with Tibetan Bon religion (a native religion of Tibet).

According to Tibetan historical records, when Princess Wencheng of the Tang Dynasty (618-907) was married to the Tibetan King Songtsan Gambo, she brought to Tibet the costumes, music and dances of the Han people. These were greatly admired by the King, and he arranged for 16 beautiful young women to be trained in an art form combining Han-style and Tibetan folk song and dance.

In the eighth Century, Tibetan King Khrisong Detsan converted to Buddhism. He invited a monk from India to spread Buddhism in Tibet and built Samye Monastery. At the inauguration ceremony, a dance was staged based on Bon deity worship ritu-

als and Tibetan folk dances.

Later, during the period of the fifth Dalai Lama (circa 17th century), this performance art was separated from religious rituals and became an independent dramatic form.

The tradition was passed down from one generation to the next. What started off as pantomime evolved into Tibetan opera - distinguished by its structured songs, dances, chants and folk ballad dialogues.

Lavish, flamboyant and exaggerated

Traditionally, Tibetan opera is staged in an open, circular space sheltered by a canopy. The stage in the center represents a magic circle and central altar.

Over the centuries, a three-part procedure has evolved. Each per-

formance begins with the purification and blessing of the stage. Then the narrator explains the plot section by section as the opera is being performed. The performance ends with a ritual of blessing.

With no realistic scenery or props, it is left to the narrator to conjure up these effects in the audience's imagination. Rapidly chanted narration alternates with sung dialogue repeated by the chorus on the side of the stage. The drumbeat and cymbals punctuate all the movements, and the dances are refined, exaggerated and vigorous.

Costumes are lavish, with rich brocades and flamboyant masks. The role of all the performers can be clearly identified from the mask each one wears. A red mask refers to the king; a green mask, to the queen; yellow is for lamas and dei-



Photo by Photocom

ties. Usually on the forehead of the mask there is a motif of the sun and moon. Some of the masks have various divine animal forms.

Historical events, myths and magic are woven together with earthly humor and scenes from the daily life of ordinary people.

Through hard times

Throughout the ages Tibetan opera has played a central role in the life of the Tibetan people. It features prominently in many Tibetan festivals and temple fairs, some of which are specifically designed for such performances, such as Shoton, or Yoghurt Festival.

By the 19th century most districts in Tibet had their own opera troupes, and it spread into neighboring India, Bhutan and Nepal.

However in the 20th century, like many of China's traditional folk arts, Tibetan opera, was for a time on the verge of disappearing.

In Qomolang Village, 65-year-old Cangjue still has vivid memories of the hardship of the last century. She was once the only female master artist of the former Qomolang Village Tibetan Opera Troupe, popular throughout Tibet. "As a toddler, I followed my parents around, performing for meager returns. My stomach was often filled with nothing. Later I joined the village troupe. We used to perform in Lhasa and neighboring areas in summer. When winter came, we had to trek to Nepal and India. Those trips were hard."

During its 600 years of development, Tibetan people created some 20 traditional opera repertoires, however some of these have been lost, with only the names and the basis of the plots remembered today.

According to the elders in Qomolang Village, the troupe was able to perform the famous Eight Great Classical Tibetan Operas, including *Prince Nor-bzang*, *Maiden Vgro-ba-bzang-mo*, *Brothers Don-yod* and *Don-grub*, *Gzugs-kyi-nyi-ma*, *Pad-ma-vod-vba*, and *Maiden Shang-sa*, based on historic events, famous lives, folk tales and stories from the sutras.

However, the troupe that produced many master performers of Tibetan Opera disbanded years ago when hard times hit, like many other village troupes.

Many older artists passed away, some troupes were forced to cut down their performances due to the cost of costumes and props, others tried to attract younger audiences by including "pop dances and songs" in their repertoire, all of which hastened the decline of Tibetan opera.

Rebirth

To salvage and preserve the unique art form, a nationwide rescue program has been launched in recent years.

Now, most village troupes can perform the Eight Great Classical Operas, and Tibetan opera plays an active role in all kinds of national theatrical works competitions. Meanwhile Tibetan opera troupes have toured Japan, the United States and other countries, and is recognized as a treasure of Chinese ethnic art.

Tibetan opera returned to Qomolang Village in 2002, with the re-establishment of the village troupe. One old man is particularly active in the training of the new troupe. He is Grandpa Dorje, 66 years old. Grandpa Dorje becomes excited whenever he talks about the day in 1964 when he performed at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing. "Most of the 28 young performers had never received any training in the performing art, but I believe they can succeed."

The government of Tibet Autonomous Region is currently making preparations to have Tibetan opera listed as a Masterpiece of Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO.

As Basang, an actress with the Tibetan Opera Troupe said, "Tibetan Opera has a very large audience, not only in Tibet, but in other parts of China and across the world. Although many of the audience can't understand the lyrics, they can understand the performances through the songs and dances. I'm optimistic about the future of Tibetan opera."

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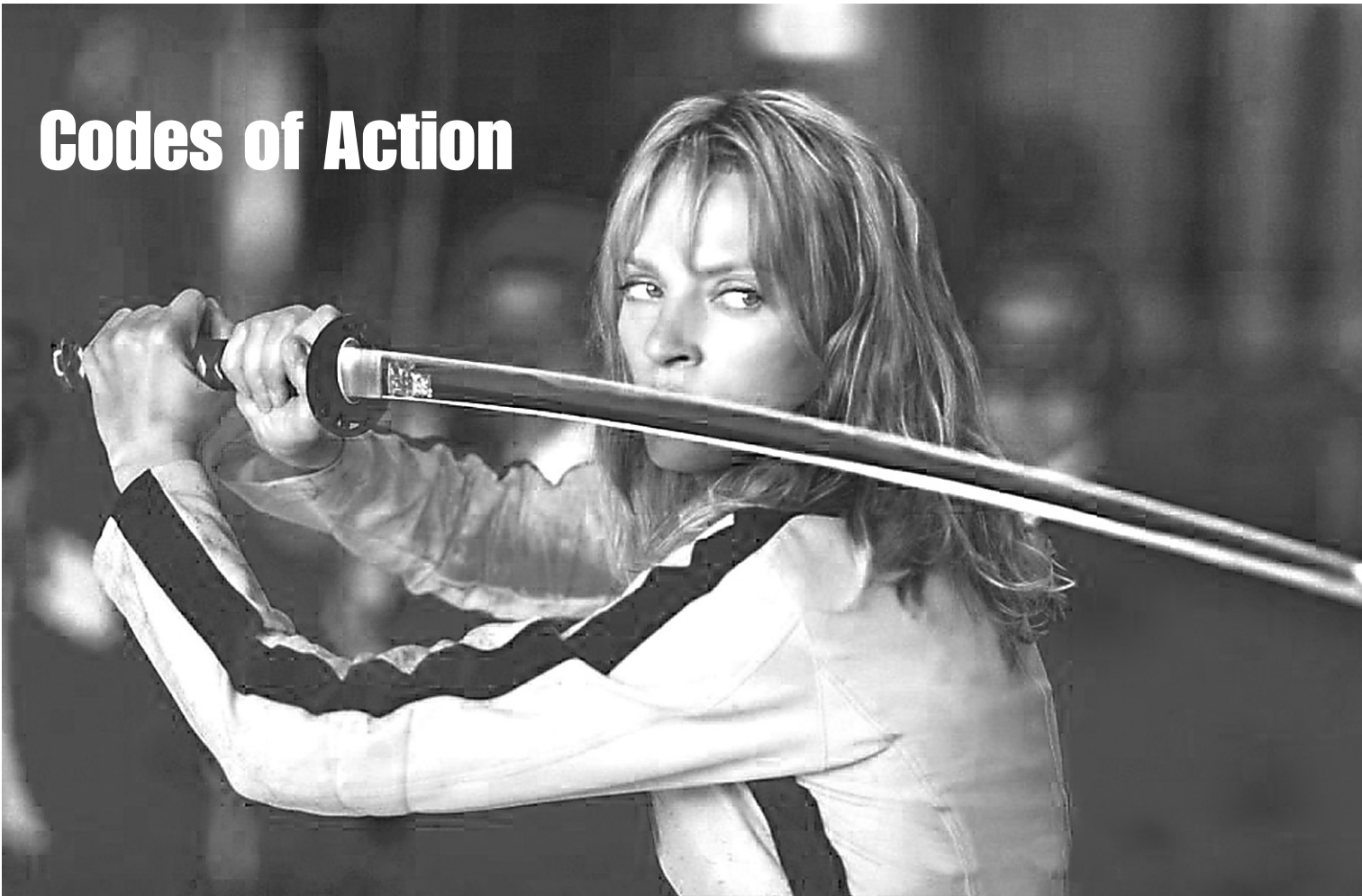
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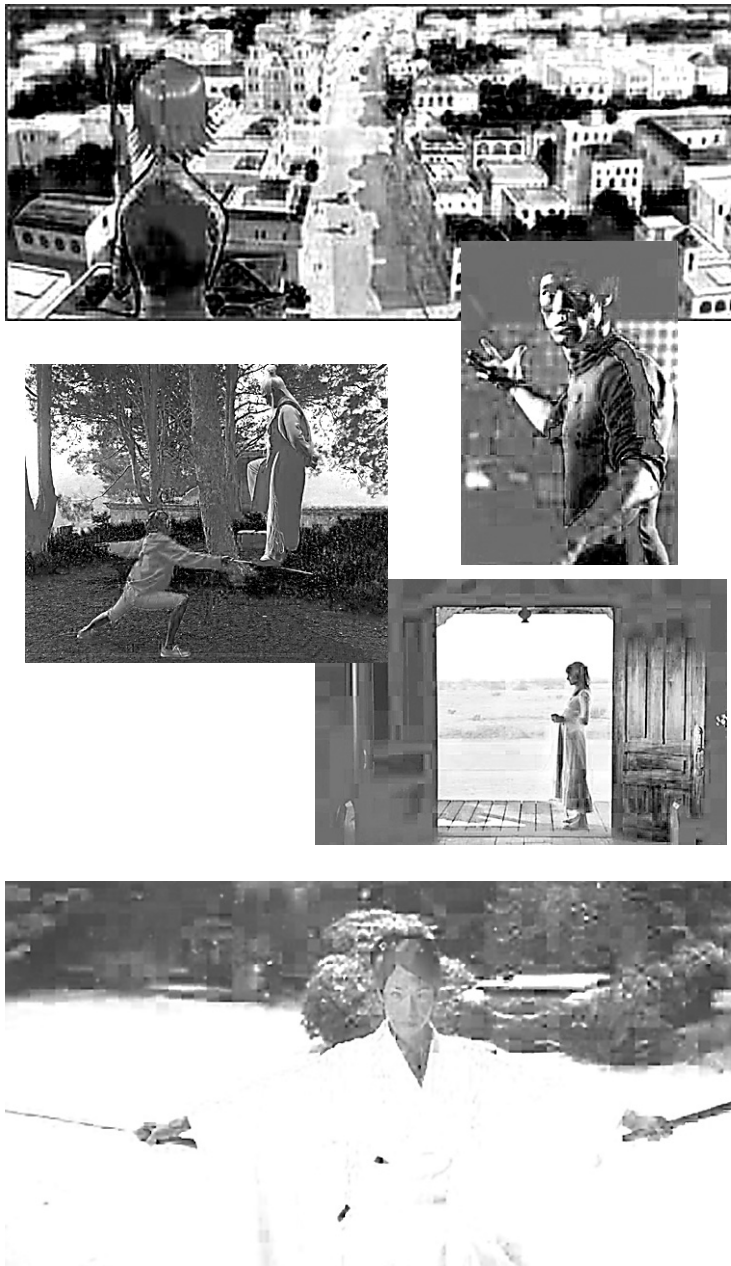
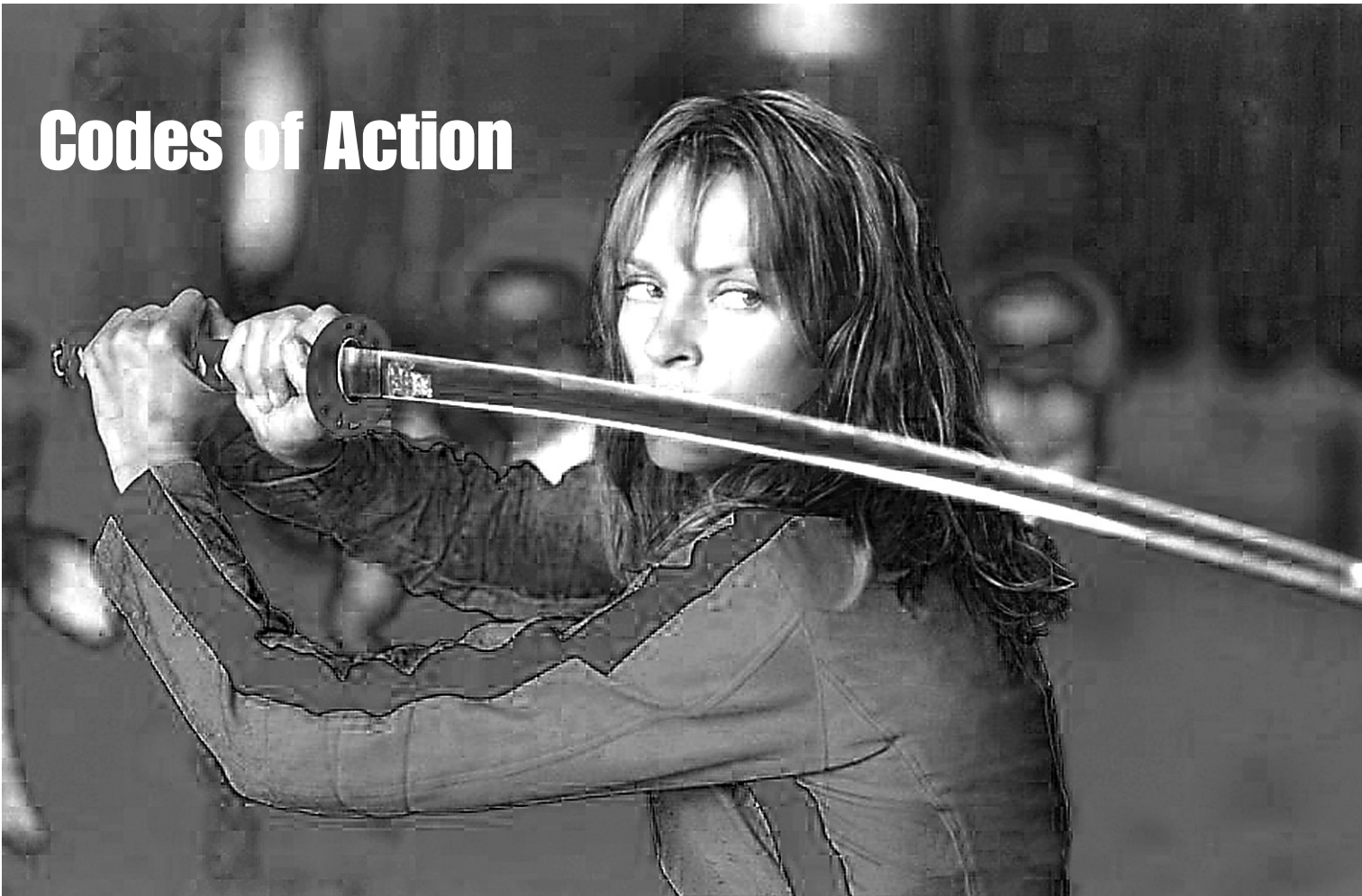
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By Jiang Haoshu

The language of action may be universal, but it is spoken in definite dialects, particularly when it comes to film.

A key word in the Chinese dialect of action is *renao*, normally translated as active and bustling and used to describe a busy celebrative occasion. It became part of more martial speak when creatively used by Shi Nai'an (c. 1296-1370) in his classic novel of battling bandit-heroes *Outlaws of the Marsh*.

More recently, Chinese audiences have widely thrown around the word *renao* to describe Quentin Tarantino's *Kill Bill* movies, that together present a brave, cutting-edge patchwork of diverse cultures and codes of action.

Chinese viewers have responded well to the *Kill Bill* films not only because their status as fresh and cool, but also because they link directly to familiar action precedents of decades and centuries past.

At the start of *Kill Bill* Vol. 1, the old logo of the Shaw Brothers, the Hong Kong producers of countless classic kung fu flicks, hits the screen in a reference that certainly went over many heads in the West and almost none in China. What follows is a two-episode, four-hour celebration of Eastern and Western action traditions that both slashes through and revels in convention.

Before director Quentin Tarantino set out to make this post-modern, ground-breaking collage of action, he spent months at home watching reams of "B" action movies of the 1970s and 80s from Hollywood as well as Japan and China. After four years of assimilation, he took the moves, scenes and themes he liked and sewed them together into a sum arguably greater than its parts.

Japanese action: aesthetic code

To find Japanese influence on these films, look no further than the main poster for *Kill Bill* Vol. 1, which features star actress Uma Thurman posed wielding a samurai sword.

From weapons to military ethics to armor, the impact of Japanese culture on the international language of action film is undeniable. The war epics of Akira Kurosawa and other Japanese filmmakers are acknowledged as influential classics around the world. Archetypal samurai armor even influenced George Lucas when he was planning his classic *Star Wars* in the 1970s, their inspiration clear in the design of the outlandish black outfit of villain Darth Vader.

Japanese aesthetics and action styles are clear throughout both *Kill Bill* pictures, but most obviously in the first movie, as the crucial scene takes place in Tokyo. In a hipster-ridden, tradition-

Codes of Action



Uma Thurman as the Bride in *Kill Bill* Vol. 1



An eclectic mix of action references (top to bottom): Japanese anime; Bruce Lee; superhuman kung fu master Pai Mei; Westerns; showdown in a Japanese garden.



al Japanese teahouse, Thurman's vengeful Bride character and her unyielding *katana* bloodily hack through an army of crazed thugs to get to Lucy Liu's O-Ren, the dead-kimono-clad head of the city's *yakuza*, or mafia. Their showdown is set in a snow-covered traditional garden that seems plucked straight from Japanese anime.

That popular school of animation gets an earlier chapter of its own, telling O-Ren's back story in a disturbing piece of work that features the frenetic cutting, expressive art and superviolence that have made anime a global phenomena.

Chinese kung fu: fast and furious

While Japan may dominate the first film, the second one flips the script to hone in on Chinese action traditions, mostly clearly represented in the flashback to the Bride's cruel lessons at the hand of 150-year-old kung fu master Pai Mei.

At the start of that scene, the Bride claims prowess in the art of wielding a Japanese sword to the disgust of her xenophobic master. "The exquisite art of the samurai sword? Don't make me laugh. It is only fit for Japanese fat heads," Pai Mei spits.

All notions of rivalry aside, his unflattering assessment invites deeper comparisons between Chinese and Japanese action as reflected on film. In many Japanese actioners, fights are presented almost ceremoniously - serious, slow, static and resolute.

In comparison, Chinese action

films are much more "active", and hence more immediately engaging. Tales of skilled kung fu artists chopping and kicking their way through adversaries in whirling shows of bone-crunching power and speed have become popular the world over, mostly on the backs of icons Jacky Chan and Bruce Lee.

Lee's lasting reputation was forged from both his kung fu skills and his inimitable presence, which rendered him a model of "cool" and probably the first male Asian sex symbol in the US. That is a legacy to which Tarantino plays direct tribute, outfitting the Bride at the end of the first movie in a yellow jumpsuit identical to that famously worn by Lee in his last film, *Game of Death*. Even the black masks worn by O-Ren's disposable henchmen seem to hark back to Lee's mask-wearing breakout role in the US TV series *The Green Hornet*.

These days, the global popularity and influence of Chinese kung fu has probably surpassed even the heady days of Lee's stardom, as a new generation of action masters, particularly in the form of choreographers like Hong Kong's Yuan Ho-ping, have headed to Hollywood and left their stamps on such blockbusters as *The Matrix* trilogy and *Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon*. Yuan leant his experienced hand to *Kill Bill* as well, orchestrating high-speed scenes that feature less "wire-fu" than those earlier films.

The influence of global super-

star Jacky Chen is also clear in amusing displays of make-shift fighting with last-minute, handy weapons, while drawn-out build-ups to battles and patches of pacing show inspiration from Hong Kong action wunderkind John Woo.

With all the Hong Kong references, Master Pai Mei is a natural for the movie, his character lifted directly from a Shaw Brothers flick of the 1970s. The name Pai Mei actually first appeared as a *xiaoke*, or roaming fighter, in fiction from the Song Dynasty (960-1279) and again after the Shaw's treatment as a magic-wielding monk in Tsui Hark's early 1980s fantasy martial spectacular *The Warriors of Zu* (*Shushanzhuan*).

American fighting: code of the West

Instead of with swords and lethal hand strikes, action is spoken with pistols and rifles in the Western, a classic American film style. While drawing from many Japanese and Chinese influences, Tarantino by no means overlooked his native action traditions.

In the first film, perhaps the clearest Western reference is the appearance of the stereotypical character of a gruff, drawl-speaking sheriff. The second film is chock full of such nods, particularly in the duel between the Bride and Michael Madsen's Bud, shot in a wild setting that recalls the great "Spaghetti Westerns" of Italian director Sergio Leone. Even the main musical themes from two of Leone's works, composed by Ennio Morricone, spot the soundtrack.

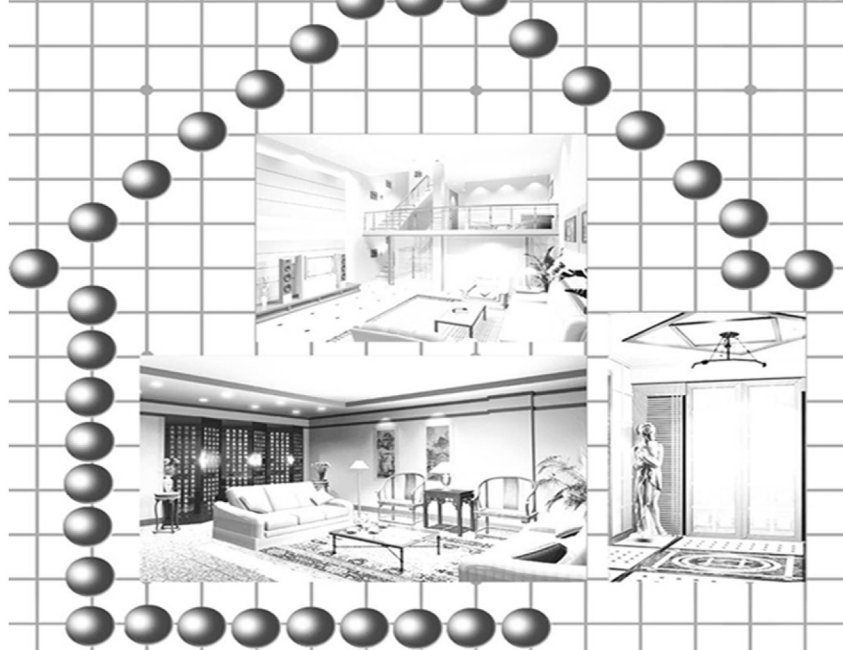
The bridge linking these Western and Eastern action influences is Bill as played by David Carradine, an American actor who earned his name as the title character of a Shaolin monk in the classic American TV program *Kung-Fu*. Fulfilling Chinese martial fiction conventions, Carradine's former master gone wrong must finally face the vengeful wrath of his former student.

When the dust has cleared following the duel between the Bride, arguably a symbol of Asian-style philosophy and feminine sense of justice, and the Western-style, hegemonic power of the masochistic Bill, one immediate conclusion is that American actions films rule. Nowhere else but in the US do films provide such wide, borderless canvases for mixing elements of global action styles to compete with and complement each other. In this sense, *Kill Bill* Vol. 1 and 2 are films to cherish, neatly summarizing the evolution of fighting films of many cultures while celebrating the diversity and richness of the world's codes of action.

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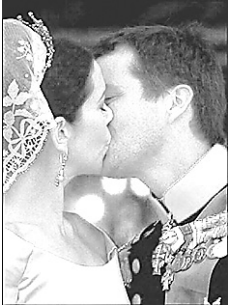
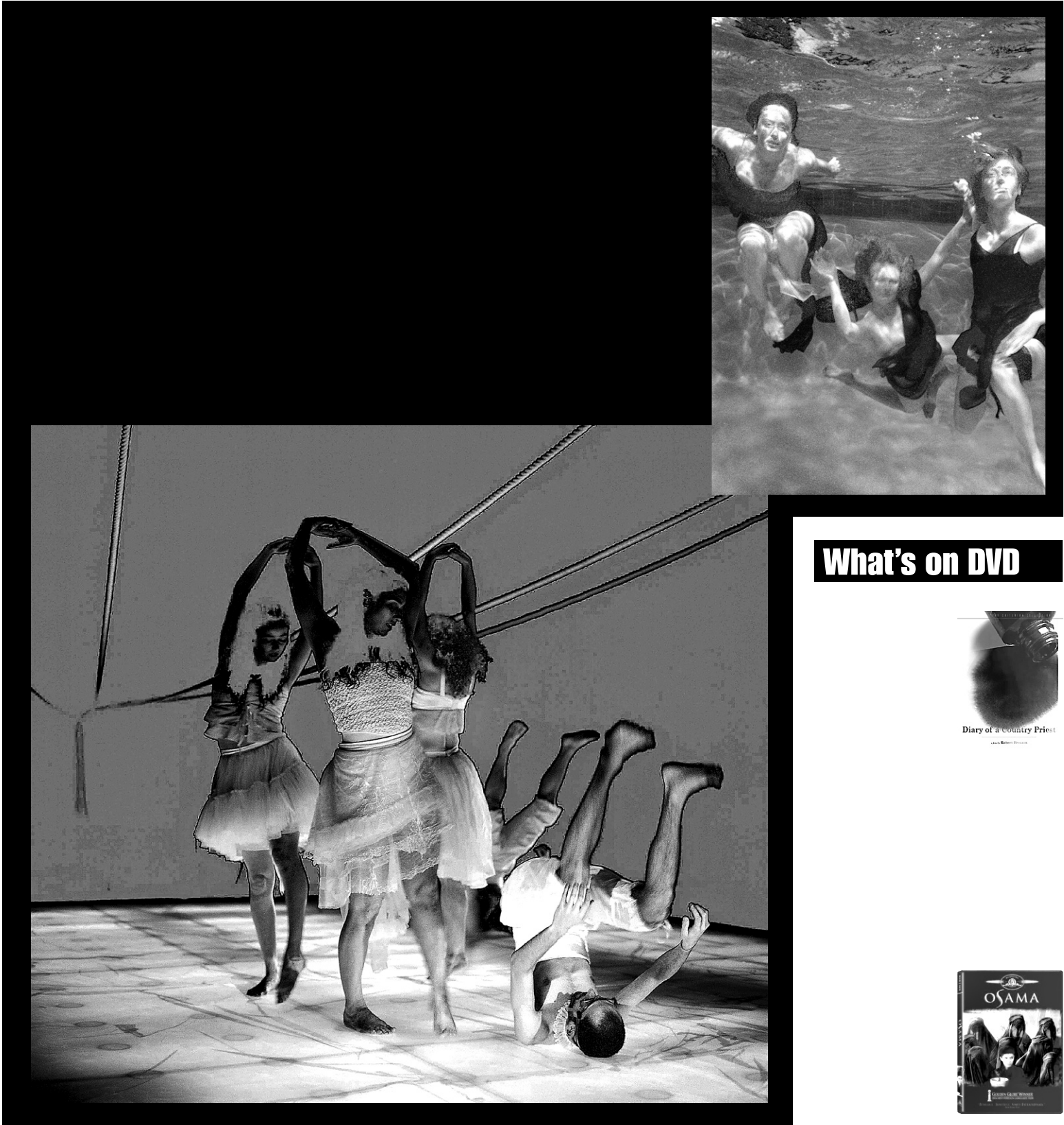
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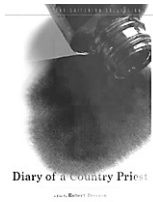
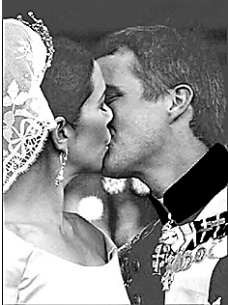
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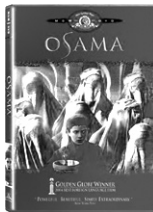
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Diary of a Country Priest
Jean Renoir



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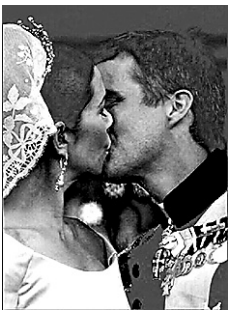
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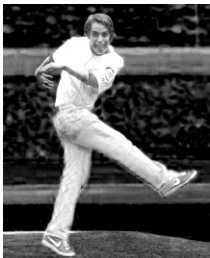
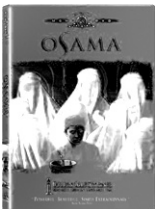


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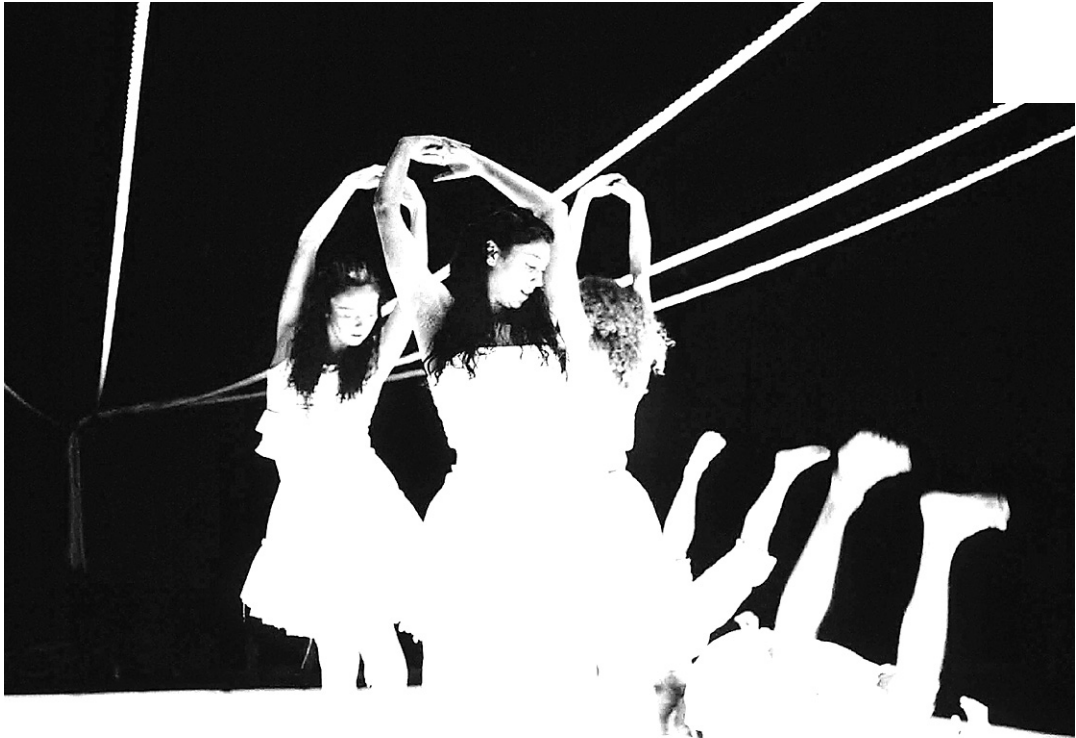
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Irish Mermaids Dance into Town

By Yu Shanshan

“She would have wept, but Mermaids cannot weep, and therefore, when they are troubled, suffer infinitely more than humans do,” wrote Hans Christian Anderson in his classic tale, *The Little Mermaid* 168 years ago. The emotional and dramatic tension that permeates the little mermaid’s story lends itself perfectly to this contemporary dance adaptation of Anderson’s story, performed by Dublin-based CoisCéim Dance Theatre. Choreographed by David Bolger, *Mermaids* deals with the themes of love, yearning, suffering, self-sacrifice and ultimately transformation, and explores man’s increasingly destructive relationship with the sea

and the myths surrounding those mysterious creatures. Founded in 1995, CoisCéim premiered *Mermaids* in Dublin in May 2003. Bolger has assembled a cast well able to support his vision and meet the demands of his cutting-edge choreography. Jodie Fried makes little difference in details of costumes between the four female dancers, while Paul Groothius’ soundscape is facilitated by live music from Conor Linehan and Ellen Cranitch. And John Comiskey’s set on the diagonal eloquently underscores the otherworldliness of the piece. **Where:** Mini Theatre of Beijing People’s Art Theatre **When:** May 27 to 29 **For tickets,** call 6524 9847



Country Priest

Made in 1951, this film is one of the most exquisite and representative works of the French director Robert Bresson. It explores, in a black-and-white diary, the spiritual alienation of a young county priest. Winner of the International Award at the Venice Film Festival. French language, Chinese and English subtitles. Features: Audio Commentary of film historian Peter Cowie and original trailer. DVD9



Osama

Inspired by a true story in Afghanistan where a mother disguised her daughter as a boy as a means of survival under the Taliban rule, this film has been widely acclaimed by critics around the world. Golden Globe winner of Best Foreign Language Film. Winner of the Youth Award at the Cannes Film Festival. Pashtu language, Chinese, English, Korean subtitles. DVD5



Les Miserables

Adaptations of Victor Hugo’s masterpiece are many, but this is among the most faithful and classic. Jointly produced in 1958 by France, Italy and former East Germany, it gathered under its banner the most outstanding performers of that time, starring Jean Gabin, who was named best actor at the Berlin and Cannes film festivals for his performance. French language, Japanese and Chinese subtitles. DVD5



Billboard Singles Top 5

Title	Artist	Album
1 Burn	Usher	Confessions
2 I Don't Wanna Know	Mario Winans Featuring Enya & P. Diddy	Hurt No More
3 Yeah!	Usher Featuring Lil Jon & Ludacris	Confessions
4 Naughty Girl	Beyonce	Dangerously In Love
5 This Love	Maroon5	Songs About Jane



Official UK Singles Chart Top 5

Title	Artist	Album
1 F.U.R.B. (F U Right Back)	Frankee	Furb (CD-Single)
2 F**k It (I Don't Want You Back)	Eamon	I Don't Want You Back
3 Irish Blood English Heart	Morrissey	You Are the Quarry
4 Dip It Low	Christina Milian	It's About Time
5 Don't Tell Me	Avril Lavigne	Under the Skin



On the Billboard Chart, Usher tops himself this week as his second single *Burn* ends the 12-week reign of his own hit *Yeah!* atop the Billboard Hot 100. In addition, Usher becomes the second artist this year to replace his own single

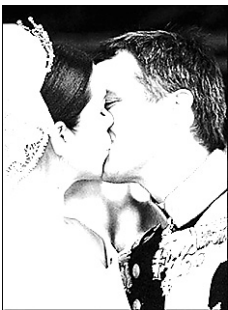
at No. 1, following OutKast’s *Hey Ya!*, which was ousted by *The Way You Move* on February. On the UK Chart, Eamon has been kicked off the top of the Official Chart by Frankee’s *F.U.R.B* – the comeback track in response

to the rapper’s *F*** It (I Don't Want You Back)*. Frankee claims to be Eamon’s ex and the woman he’s singing about in his song that stayed at No. 1 for four weeks. The comeback track uses the same tune as Eamon’s *F**k It*.

WORLDWIDE

Denmark's Crown Prince Weds Aussie

As crowds cheered throughout Copenhagen’s flag and flower-filled streets, Denmark’s Crown Prince Frederik wed Australian Mary Elizabeth Donaldson, making her the first Australian to join a European royal family. Prince Frederik, 35, and Mary Donaldson, 32, met in a Sydney bar in September 2000 during the Olympic Games. After painstakingly keeping their relationship secret for 18 months, Donaldson decided in 2002 to leave her quiet, anonymous life – and relinquish both her Australian and British citizenships – to follow Frederik halfway around the world to become a Danish princess. More than 80 percent of Danes polled last week said they thought she would make a good crown princess. (AFP)



Frederik and Mary

Rumsfeld's 'Poetic' Voice Set to Music

After hearing Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld dress down the media at Pentagon press briefings, two San Francisco musicians came to an inevitable conclusion: his words simply must be set to chamber music. So they’ve taken Rumsfeld’s explanations of world affairs and set them to airy classical compositions. *The Poetry of Donald Rumsfeld and Other Fresh American Songs* includes *The Unknown* from Rumsfeld’s February 12, 2002, briefing on the situation in Iraq: “As we know, there are known knowns. There are things we know we know. We also know there are known unknowns ...” (AP)



Composer Bryant Kong and Elender Wall

Culkin Makes Literary Debut

Party Monster star Macaulay Culkin’s soon-to-be-released *Junior* will tell the tale of his life as a child star, but publishers insist it is not an autobiography. The former *Home Alone* star’s first literary effort, *Junior*, will feature factual details about his family struggles and the difficulties he had to confront as adulthood loomed, however Miramax Books say the novel also has a strong fictional component to it.



Macaulay Culkin

A Miramax statement, as quoted on American gossip site *The Scoop*, says, “Part memoir, part rant, part comedic tour-de-force, *Junior* is full of the hard-won wisdom of Culkin’s quest to come to terms with the awesome pressures of childhood mega-stardom and family dysfunction. He understands that ‘having fun and being happy are two totally different things’, yet at the same time he warns, ‘The end of the world is coming and I’m going to have unfinished business.’” (IMDB)

Hong Kong Heroines Vie for Spielberg Film Role

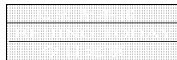
Two darlings of Hong Kong cinema, Maggie Cheung and former Bond girl Michelle Yeoh, are fighting for a lead role in a Steven Spielberg film. Spielberg is producing the adaptation of bestseller *Memoirs of a Geisha* in a long-awaited project originally slated to star Cheung, best known for her role in an art house director Wong Kar-wai’s film, *In the Mood for Love*.



Maggie Cheung

Now it has emerged that Malaysian-born action heroine Michelle Yeoh has been invited to audition with *Chicago* director Rob Marshall behind the lens, jeopardizing Cheung’s chances of a Hollywood role, according to *Apple Daily*.

Memoirs of a Geisha, by American writer Arthur Golden tells the story of a young girl who rises to the top of Japan’s cutthroat hostess industry. (AFP)



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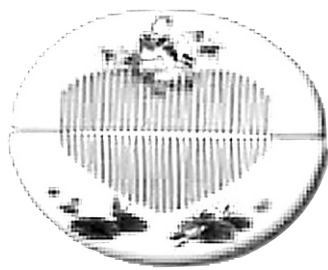
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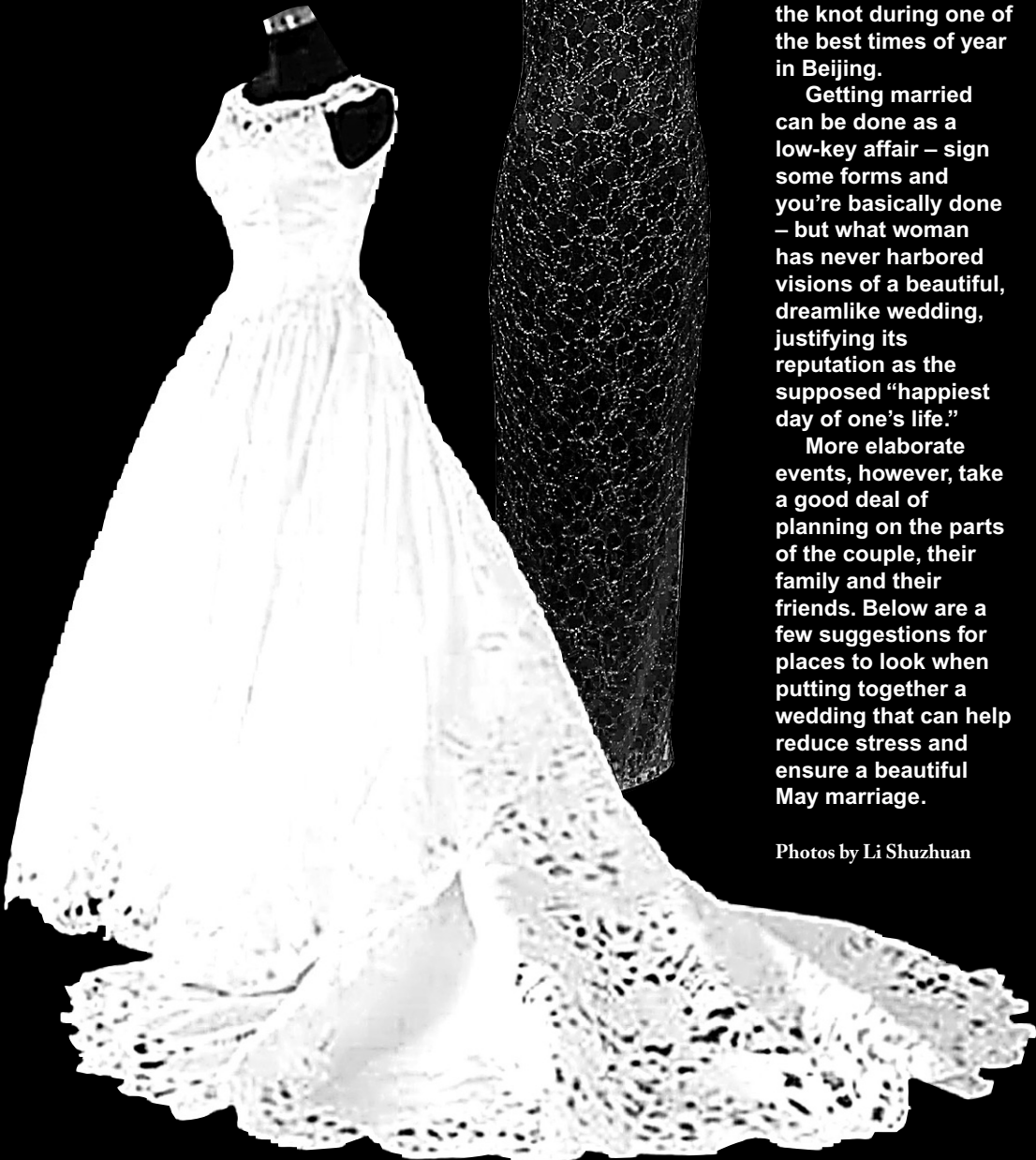
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Here Comes the Bride



April showers not only bring May flowers, they also bring the annual May wedding spree, as people line up to tie the knot during one of the best times of year in Beijing.

Getting married can be done as a low-key affair – sign some forms and you're basically done – but what woman has never harbored visions of a beautiful, dreamlike wedding, justifying its reputation as the supposed “happiest day of one's life.”

More elaborate events, however, take a good deal of planning on the parts of the couple, their family and their friends. Below are a few suggestions for places to look when putting together a wedding that can help reduce stress and ensure a beautiful May marriage.

Photos by Li Shuzhuan



Giving Red



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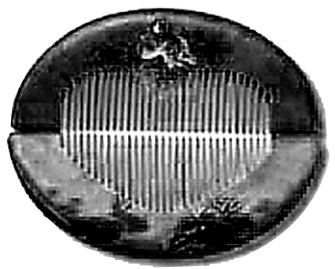

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Photos by Li Shuzhuan



Giving Red





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Bold and Beautiful

By Lu Pinrou

A good step towards make wedding fantasies approach reality is to head to Sunbride Studio, a bridal specialist in the basement of the Beifang Jiayuan Hotel in Wangfujing.

The small and unassuming store is a treasure trove of wedding gowns, some made at its own workshop, some imported from Taiwan, Japan and South Korea. All the fabric is shipped in from overseas, as China does not produce cloth stiff enough for fine dresses, according to the store's owner.

One of the more popular gowns with Chinese brides shows an interesting mix of Eastern and Western styles, its torso shaped like a Chinese *qipao* while the lower part has European feel. It features contrasting colors of silvery white and golden yellow sure to glow against Asian skin, is surprisingly comfortable and bears a price tag of 2,900 yuan.

A dress that draws more foreign customers, priced at 6,800 yuan, was designed and made in Taiwan with a classic Western cut highlighted with snow-white gauze and lace. Even more elegant, and expensive, is a dress made of silk covered with gauze and swaths of lace with a long train. The cost is 8,800 yuan.

To ensure the best in personalized service, the shop owner asks customers to call ahead and reserve times for individual advice and sizing. Careful shoppers can start by checking the store's website, www.sunbride.com.

Where: No. A426, B4, Beifang Jiayuan Hotel, No. 218-1 Wangfujing, Dongcheng

Open: by appointment
Tel: 8511 7780



By Yu Shanshan

Red is the traditional color of Chinese weddings, so here are a few aptly-colored gift ideas sure to win hearts.



Indian handmade bed sheet (660 yuan) and cushions (60 yuan - 200 yuan)

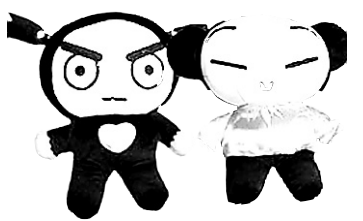
This beautiful handmade sheet is sure to bring joy to any new bride hoping to give her bed a warm and romantic vibe. The matching cushions show amazing attention

to detail, the shiny threads and sequins all sewn by hand.

Where: Dripping Eaves Collection, No. 216, Tongli Studio, Sanlitun Houjie, Chaoyang
Open: 11 am - 9 pm **Tel:** 6417 7715-216

Pucca and Garu dolls (prices differ by size)

Pucca is the daughter of the boss of a Chinese restaurant and absolutely crazy about noodles. Despite her tomboy nature, her heart is hopelessly devoted to Garu, a descendant of a ninja



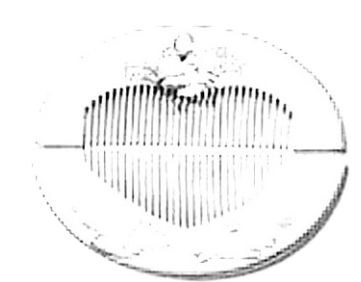
whose aspires to restore his family's name. But he is distracted from his quest by Pucca's love.

Where: Pucca Club, second floor, Grand Pacific shopping center (Juntai Baihuo), No. 133 Xidan Beidajie, Xicheng
Open: 9 am - 10 pm **Tel:** 800 810 2158

Matching wedding combs (198 yuan)

The scene of ultimate romance in the eyes of many ancient Chinese poets was a husband combing his wife's long, lustrous hair smooth in the morning. In many old love stories, twin combs that form a complete circle when put together, were tokens of eternal love. This beautiful pair, at the Tanmujiang store, are made of box-wood colored with natural dyes.

Where: Tanmujiang, No. 52



Qianmen Avenue **Open:** 9 am - 9 pm **Tel:** 6701 2136

Jewelry box (480 yuan)

The French storeowner personally designed this jewelry box and had it made in Indonesia with native wood, though its red lacquer coating and four-footed shape give it a distinct feel of ancient China.

Where: Purple's Collection, C228-230 COFCO Plaza, No. 6 Jianguomennei Avenue **Open:** 9 am - 9 pm **Tel:** 8511 3575

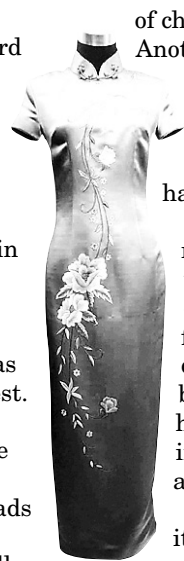
Modern Twists on Old Styles

By Sun Ling

Located on the third floor of the Gongmei Building in Wangfujing, the Hao Teng shop draws mostly natives and more China-savvy foreigners, as the main color of its dresses is red, the traditional color of Chinese weddings, not white as is standard in the West.

The top seller is a sleeveless *qipao* made from lace woven with scarlet and gold threads priced at 1,380 yuan.

The *qipao*, originally worn by Manchurian women in the Qing Dynasty, is a close-fitting dress that normally sports a high neck and cut skirt. As they developed, *qipaos* adapted to use many other materials and come in a range of lengths, but red remains the color



of choice for bridal versions.

Another of the store's red *qipaos* made of satin silk fetches a higher price of 1,680 yuan because it is decorated with delicate, hand-sewn embroidery.

Not overlooking the men, Hao Teng also sells traditional grooms' outfits, called *magua*, that feature jackets normally designed to have short, baggy sleeves. The store has a wide range of *magua* in many colors, all tagged at 598 yuan.

The shop even offers items for use once the nuptials are over, such as a large selection of sleeping gowns and robes that includes one popular silk garment highlighted with an embroidered dragon.

Where: 3rd floor, Gongyi Meishu Building, Wangfujing
Open: 9 am - 9 pm
Tel: 6528 8866-3161

Wedlock for the Web Age

By Jiang Yongzhu

The Internet revolution has extended to the wedding industry, and computer savvy couples can use online stores to take some of the pain out of their wedding preparations.

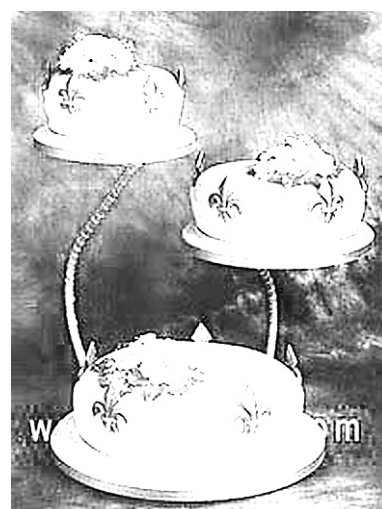
52cake.com

This site is filled with pictures of beautiful wedding cakes decorated in myriad ways with icing, lace and other materials. The two major styles are a tower of equal-sized cakes or a tall graduated arrangement. Specific sizes and heights can be set according to customers' needs. Standard three-layer versions of both the above cakes cost 618 yuan.

Cnbjflowers.com

This site stocks nearly every kind of flower needed for a wedding, from bridal bouquets to table centerpieces to car hoods.

Bridal bouquets come in a rainbow of shapes, sizes and styles, priced from 80 yuan to 290 yuan. The car-top arrangement selection is similarly diverse but a good deal more expensive at 270 yuan to 1,200 yuan a set.



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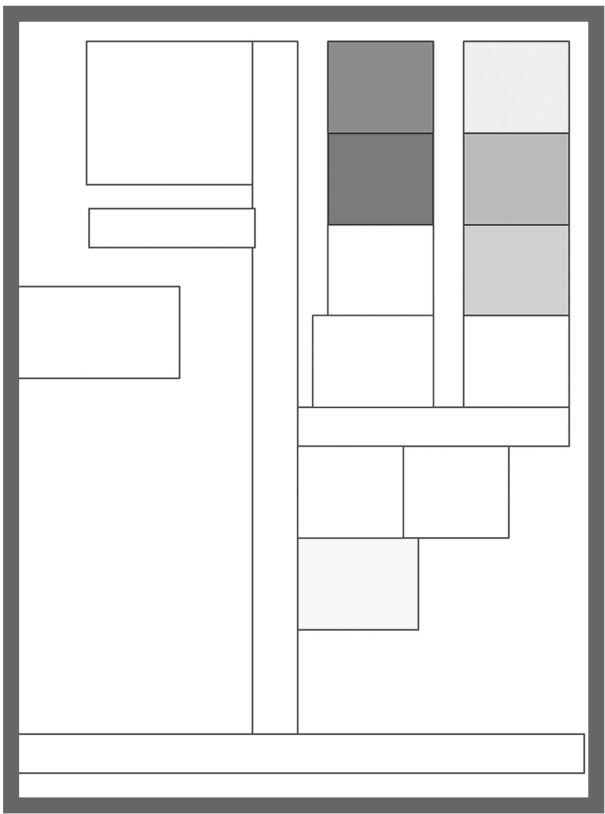
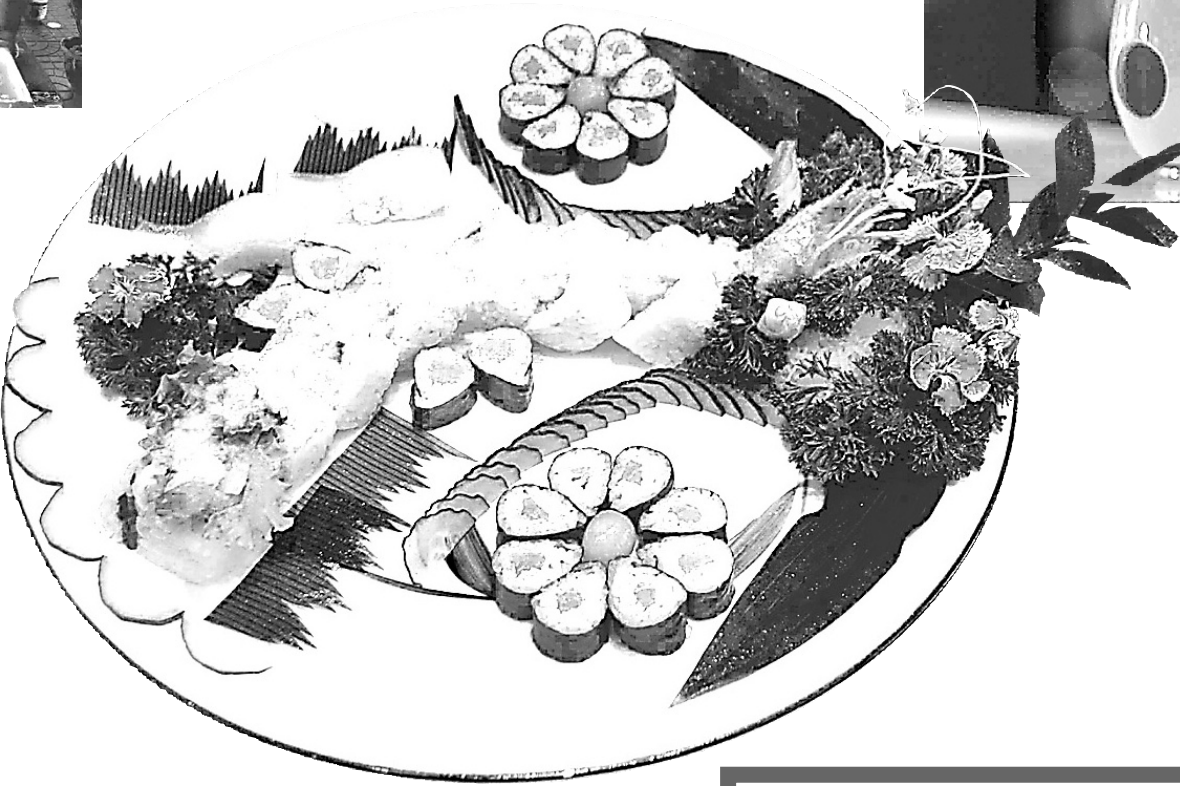
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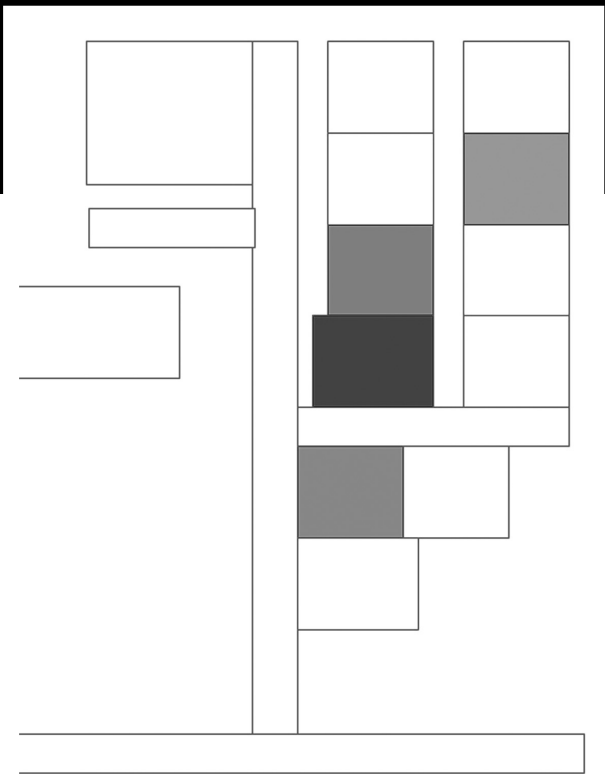
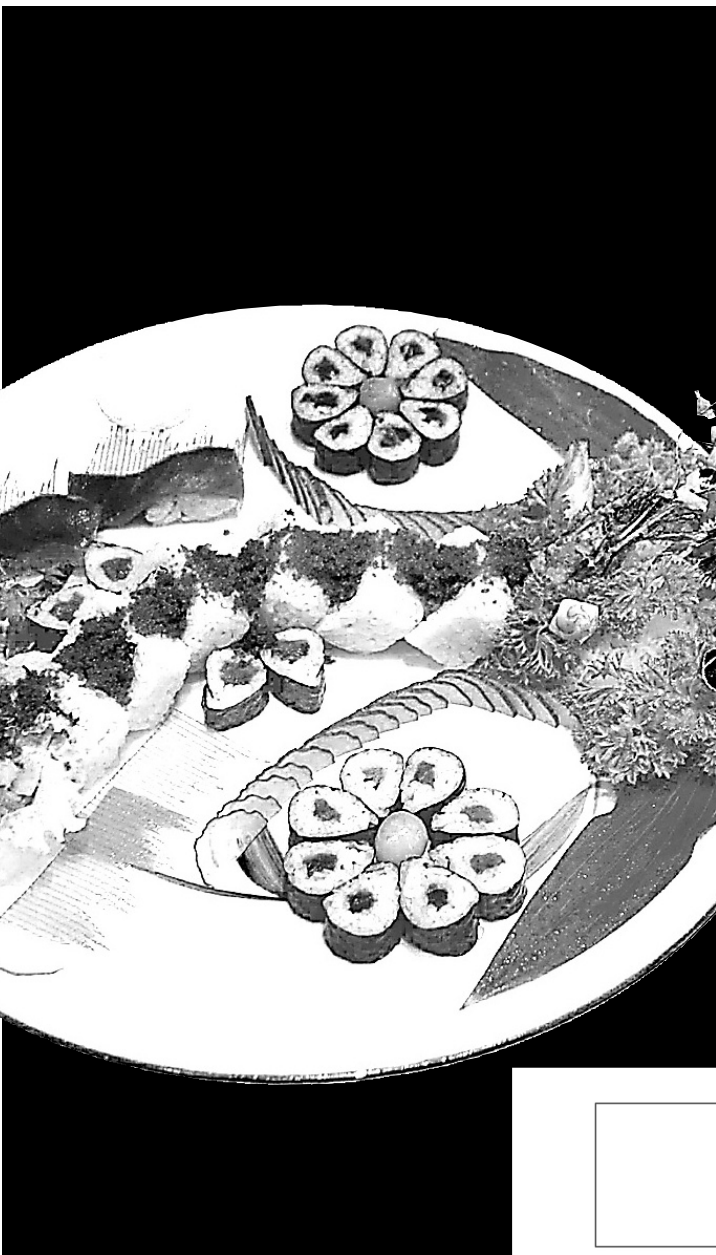
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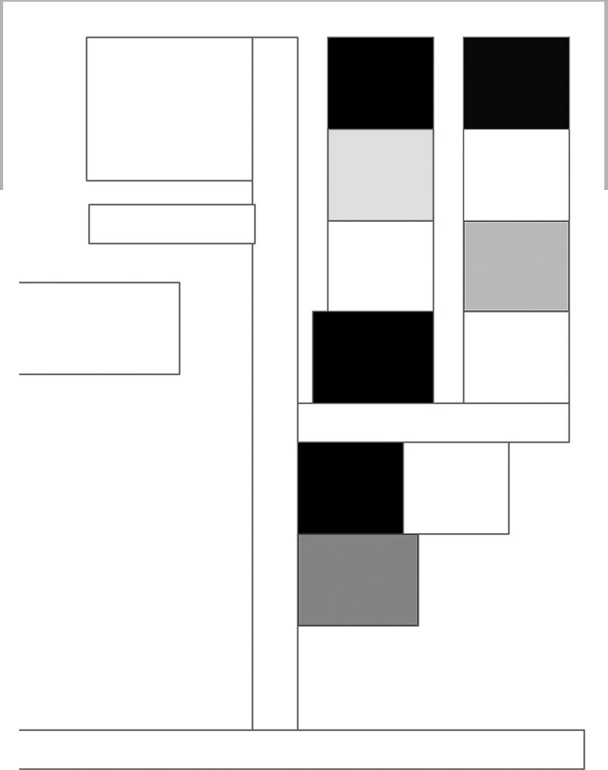
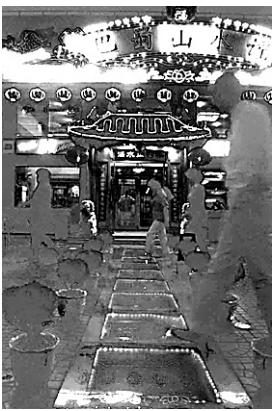
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By Lv Pinrou

The strip of eateries that leads to the main cluster starts with a UCC cafe and a Korean barbecue restaurant called **Hanweiguan** followed by **Bashu Shanshuiyao** (Rhythm of Sichuan Mountains and Rivers). As the name reveals, the kitchen here specializes in Sichuan food, known for being fresh, spicy and numbing.

One of the restaurant's most popular dishes is *xianglaxie*, or spicy crabs, served in a crab-shaped pot and priced at 156 yuan per kilo.

More exotic are the *xiangla yujiao*, or spicy fish dumplings, in which slices of battered-fried fish actually form the dumpling wrappers, stuffed with a mixture of beef and shrimp. The rich flavors of this unusual creation are rounded out by the presence of plenty of spices.

Another pride of the kitchen is the delicate and complicated *hongjiao niuzhang*, or cow hoof with hot peppers, a demanding dish that takes at least two hours and masterful knowledge of spices to prepare. Performances of Sichuan folk songs are run nightly.

Where: No. 38 Tianze Road, South of Laitai Market, Chaoyang **Open:** 9:30 am - 2:00 am **Tel:** 6461 8686, 6461 8181 **Average cost:** 30 yuan - 60 yuan per person



Next door is the **Silu Yizhan**, or Silk Road, restaurant, a busy place that features the foods of remote Xinjiang, mostly cooked by grilling or roasting. The kitchen is equipped with a special oven for the task that can reach temperatures as high as 700 degrees Centigrade, hot enough to give meat a tasty, seared crust while keeping the inside moist and tender.

One of the many delicious products of that oven is *kao yangpai*, roasted lamb ribs liberally flavored with black pepper. A good accompaniment to such meaty options is the *Xinjiang bancai*, a cooling mixture of spiced vegetables to sooth the mouth and spark the appetite on a hot day.

For a one-plate complete meal, try the *nangbaorou*, mutton with nan-bread, traditional flat loaves also sold from the restaurant's take away window. Ninety-minute shows of Xinjiang folk dances and songs kick off every evening at 8 pm, filling the restaurant with exotic sounds to match the heady scent of spice in the air.

Open: 10:30 am - midnight **Average cost:** 50 yuan **Tel:** 6465 6565, 6467 6467

Turning the corner to the main strip, diners will first see **Yizhu**, a cute Japanese restaurant. Its attractive interior features simple, clean lines and plenty of black. The dinner menu is limited to set meals, most of which include seafood or sushi, pickles and rice, and usually cost a few hundreds. For lunch, there are a few more options, such as *ziranchan duobaoyu*, or natural flounder (660 yuan for two pieces), seafood on udon noodles and vegetable tempura. Dinner reservations are recommended, as the restaurant packs out most nights.

Where: Dongfang Qicai Dashijie, Nvrenjie, Chaoyang **Open:** 10 am - 10 pm **Average cost:** 60 yuan and up (a lot) **Tel:** 8451 3001/2

Sichuan spice is the main draw of the **Hongjingyu Hot Fish** restaurant, where the house

Shuizhuyu (fish in hot oil), 38 yuan



Sulima wine, 128 yuan, at Hongjingyu

special is ever-popular *shuizhuyu*, or fish in hot oil. Here, this ubiquitous dish is spruced up by using fresh fish from the Yangtze River accompanied by your choice of red peppers or less usual green peppers, which are more fragrant and less incendiary than their red-hued cousins.

Another oft-ordered choice is *qiangchao yuanbaicai*, well-cooked fresh cabbage with chili peppers priced at just 8 yuan. To both cool and stoke the fires of a *shuizhuyu* meal, try the *suanla liangfen*, starchy clear noodles with vinegar and pepper, or fresh pickled pig ear, chicken feet or just vegetables.

Open: 11 am - 11 pm **Average Cost:** 60 yuan **Tel:** 8451 5426



Ganguo sunzi ji (chicken with bamboo shoot), 38 yuan at Xiangxi Tucui

Jiangshan yipianhong, a starter at Xiangxi Tucui, 38 yuan

The culinary traditions of Hunan Province are represented at **Xiangxi Tucui**, where many ingredients are shipped up from Chairman Mao's home province.

The house special is a secret spicy sauce applied to a range of interesting meats, from chicken wings to bullfrogs and snake.

Another dish hard to find elsewhere is the Hunan delicacy *xiaochao jiaoqi*, fried cockerel. Chicken cooked with bamboo shoots in hot pot is equally popular.

Open: 11:30 am - 11 pm **Average cost:** 40 yuan **Tel:** 8448 9191



Shijin xiancai (mixed pickles), 15 yuan

Fume hoods and tabletop grills make it clear that **Cunwu Kaorou** is a

Korean barbecue joint.

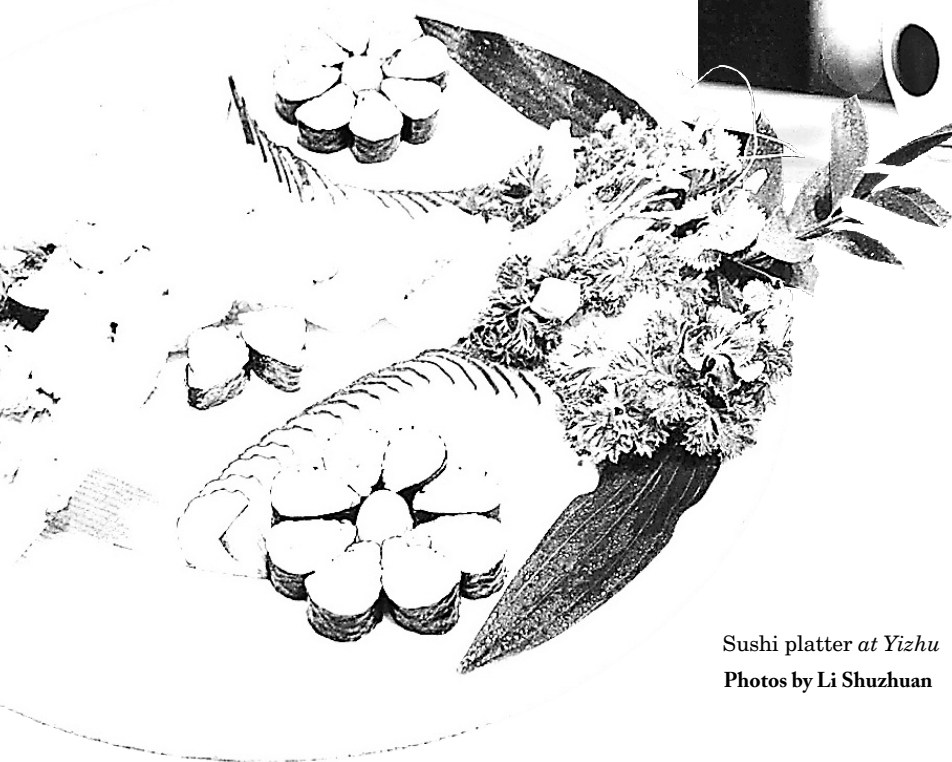
Besides cuts of marinated meats to be cooked at the table, diners can also indulge in Korean-style hot pot. Bold customers can dive into the special dog meat hot pot, served with four vegetables for only 55 yuan. The menu includes plenty of other typical Korean dishes, from kimchee to pancakes, at pretty reasonable prices.

Open: 9 am - 2 am **Average cost:** 30 yuan **Tel:** 8448 8798 / 8799

Amigos at the



Hey Ladies!



Sushi platter at Yizhu
Photos by Li Shuzhuan



far right end of the row calls itself a "Latin corner." The first floor is ruled by a bar where Latin and salsa dance classes are offered daily by professional coaches. For drinks, many people choose the "chocolate special," make-your-own hot chocolate priced from 58 yuan to 158 yuan.

Upstairs is a full-scale restaurant that serves Western



Steak Amigos-style, 88 yuan

food with clear Latin influences, like the grilled lamb chop with baby artichoke, priced at 128 yuan. Match such elegantly different fare with a selection from the restaurant's interesting wine list.

Diners after a less pricey taste of the Latin world can try the business buffet lunch, set at only 18 yuan per person, or indulge in the daily happy hour, when all beers, cocktails and



Dingxian huoyu, a house special at Southern Moon, 88 yuan

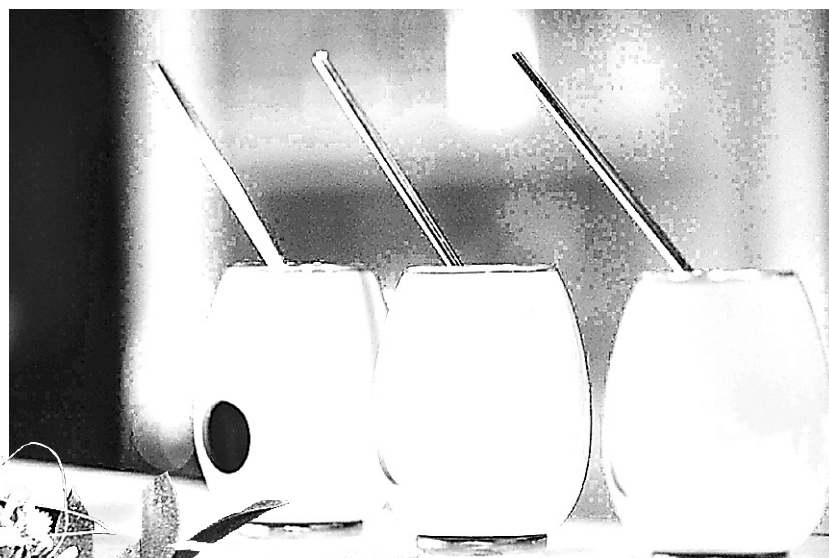
soft drinks are sold two-for-one from 4 pm to 7 pm.

Open: 6 pm - late **Average cost:** 50 yuan **Tel:** 6465 6680/1

Last but not least, the Huaiyang-style restaurant **Dingxian Huoyu**, or **Southern Moon**, deals in live fish cooked fresh to order. One house special is *qingzheng guiyu*, steamed mandarin fish priced at a worthy 98 yuan.

Among the non-fishy options is *Yangzhou shizitou*, fist-sized meatballs cooked Yangzhou-style and served in broth with green vegetables. A popular starter is a strange-sounding mix of slices of fish and pig ear.

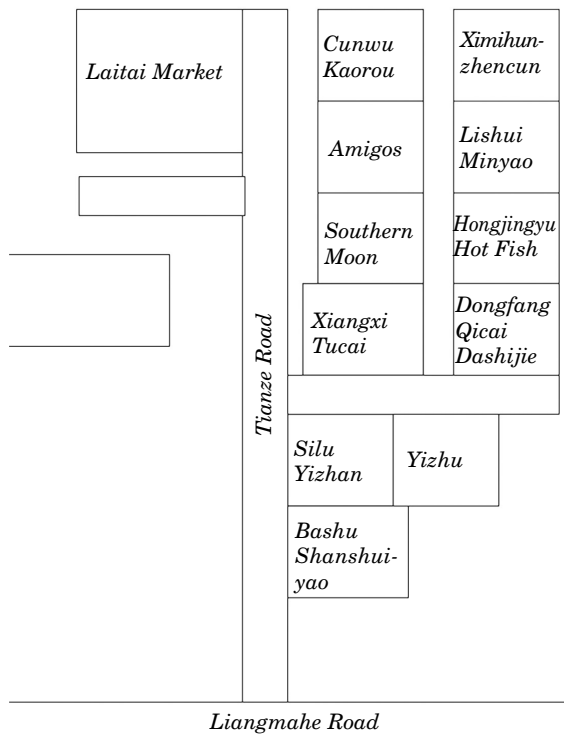
Open: 10 am - 10 pm **Average cost:** 50 yuan **Tel:** 6465 6789



Chocolate special at Amigos

From next-to nothing, the Nvrenjie (Ladies' Street) area near the Laitai Flower Market has gone up and become one of Chaoyang District's main dining hotspots in just the past year or so. Hordes of diners still pile into the compact stretch of over a dozen restaurants, drawn by the see-and-be-seen atmosphere and eclectic mix of food that ranges from regional Chinese to Japanese, Latin and Italian fare.

But is it a place for truly good eating? Nvrenjie's cool status must explain at least half its popularity, because some of its restaurants fall far short of others in less concentrated dining spots in Beijing. Below is a short review of most of the major Nvrenjie players.



Regions Done Right and Wrong

By Joel Kirkhart

When it comes to Chinese food, there's no faulting the Nvrenjie area for variety - nearly every corner of the country, from Sichuan, Hunan and Hubei to Guizhou and Yunnan, Zhejiang to Xinjiang, are represented. Yet authenticity is mixed, some restaurants doing a good job of upholding regional culinary traditions, others offering fare clearly watered down to suit Beijing tastes.

One of the better regional specialists is **Ximihunzhencun**, which serves relatively authentic takes on the unusual dishes of Guizhou Province.

The clipped together menu gets a low score for design but full marks for depth with little *jiachangcai* to be seen.

The house special is the now-familiar *suantangyu*, a classic Guizhou hotpot of fish boiled in a sour, tomato-based broth followed by more standard raw foods for dunking.

Two starters that show the kitchen knows its Guizhou are the *liangban shuidouchi* and *midoufu*. The former is a tasty and pungent cold dish of fermented soybeans mixed with strips of spring onion, cilantro sprigs and chilies. The springy, vaguely tofu-like midoufu is actually made of rice and well matched by a topping of crunchy fried beans and a pepper-laden sauce.

There are lots of meatier options, including the new addition *hebao niurou*, or beef cooked in lotus leaf, and several dishes cooked with yansuan, Guizhou-style preserved vegetables.

In the fish section, a good choice is the *xiangla chaotianluo*, or spicy snails, which are plucked from their shells, cleaned and then fried with peppers and green onion. The dish is a bit heavy on oil, but the snails are nicely cooked, their flavor enhanced by a sauce fragrant of wine.

More exotic choices include funky mushrooms, such as the *lachao funiuganjuan*, or spicy stir-fried *niuganjuan* mushrooms. The price is reasonable, but a heavy hand with the oil and the fungi's naturally slippery texture combine for a dish of disarming viscosity.

If you're after really authentic Guizhou food,

Ximihunzhencun is not the best place to go in this city, but it can certainly hold its own on very competitive Nvrenjie.

Where: Dongfang Qicai Dashijie, Nvrenjie, Chaoyang **Tel:** 8454 5539 **Open:** 11 am - 12 am **Average cost:** 60 yuan per person

Less successful in playing the regional card is **Lishui Minyao**, a restaurant across the lane that serves Yunnan-style foods. Judging on one meal, the tasteful but typical decor is stronger than the food, which shows serious signs of localization, too mild for what should be flavorfully exotic fare.

The limited menu mixes a few Yunnan favorites with more common dishes, even the foreign-friendly likes of chicken in lemon sauce.

There are a few bizarre, authentic items, such as fried mealworms and unusual fungi, both many Yunnan ingredients, particularly in the cold dish area, are noticeably missing. The *liangban longzhuacai*, or sauced fern stalks served cold, sounded appealing but was disappointing, the tepid fern left to find for itself by the flavorless sauce.

Huoja rubing features slices of Yunnan cheese and cured ham heated up in a bath of sweetened water. The cheese was fine, tasting similar to fresh mozzarella, and the ham was predictably good, but the treatment seemed to only render both more rubbery than necessary.

The *daiwei xiangmaocao kaoyu*, two smallish carp stuffed with ginger and cilantro and roasted, was better. The fish were cooked well, flaky with seared skin, but not nearly as flavorful as similar dishes at other better local Yunnan establishments.

The meal ended with a Yunnan-style potato pancake, *ganbian yangyusi*. It's hard to go wrong with hashbrowns, but more spice would have been nice.

Service certainly needs work, as our water got aggressive during ordered and then disappeared. With so much competition just outside the door, Lishui Minyao needs to pick things up if it wants to survive.

Tel: 6467 6676 **Open:** **Average cost:** 60 yuan



Suantangyu (fish in hot sour soup), priced by fish size



Shijin liangmixian (mixed cold noodles), 18 yuan



Auction



Personal Classifieds

Performance



Auction



Exhibitions



Activities



Personal Classifieds

Performance

Jams



Activities



Rentals

260-square-meter apartment on 12th floor of Building A in Global Trade Mansion, separate dining, living and parlor rooms, three bedrooms, wooden floors, high-grade household electric appliances, luxuriously decorated and furnished in western classical style. Near Hanwei Building, convenient transportation. \$4,000-\$4,500 per month. Contact: Miss Wang, 6832 3385, 13901305619 Email: ninawang_bj@yahoo.com

Brand new hotel-style one bedroom apartment at real center of CBD, 88 square meters. Complete kitchen set-up, electrical appliances, cable and satellite channels, underground parking, international clubhouse, 24 hour security, north-east facing. \$1,100 or 9,200 yuan per month. Contact: Thomas Lee, 8151 1111, 13501113831 Email: LloydsChina@263.net

24 hour hot water, apartment of 68 square meter with 1 living room and 1 bedroom in Yayuncun. Convenient transportation and quiet environment, opposite Ito Yokota. 2,900 yuan per month. Contact: Peter, 13651081085 Email:

youxk@hotmail.com

Newly renovated and well furnished Class A apartment of 109 square meters, two bedrooms, dining room and living room, 25th floor. Convenient transportation, close to the Lotus Garden and Beijing West Railway Station. 24 hour security and hot water, air conditioning, broadband access. 4,500 yuan per month. Contact: Sandra, 8617 6369

Brand new three-bedroom flat in a new complex near Beijing Agricultural University, 24 hour security service, hot water, well-outfitted with decent-sized kitchen, good light and laminated floors. 4,000 yuan per month unfurnished. Welcome long-term tenants or honest agents. Email: xs_chi@yahoo.com

Situations vacant and wanted

George Rickets, American educator, seeks employment in education or business. Holder of master's degrees in international education and linguistics, he has taught government ministry employees, business classes and university students for two years in a leading Chinese University. Would be interested in a position as lead instructor, manager, head of curriculum, business English consultant

trainer and teacher trainer. Previous work experience in Indonesia, Philippines, Iran, Japan and US. Tel: 6568 5628

Mr. Gao, 42, English-speaking, reliable driver with three years experience at a joint-venture company, seeking employment. Tel: 13901153008 Email: beijing_joe@hotmail.com

Jane, 31, nice and patient Beijing graduate of an Australian University with 10 years experience in Chinese-English bilingual teaching and translation offering professional bilingual culture education, interpreting and consulting services. Tel: 8617 6369

Bevis, 27, experienced and well-educated tour guide offering personal guide services. Tel: 13641244321

George Li, 38, BA, IMBA, 10 years MNCs sales/business development management experience in machinery, industrial controls and packaging. Consistent high performance and proven national management success, leading team serving over 20 provinces and selling over \$7 million a year. Seeking a challenging

management position. Email: early_bird_04@yahoo.com.cn Tel: 13911683348

Tang Xinbo, holder of master's degree in law, is seeking a position as investment manager or advisor or lawyer for a financial, consulting, construction, travel or tourism firm. Email: txblawyer@sina.com.cn Tel: 8161 1860

For sale and wanted

Wanted: the first issue of *Beijing Today*. Email: kendallhome2000@yahoo.com

Language exchange

Rainbow, a 25-year-old girl, English major, can speak standard Mandarin without any accent, is seeking a partner for language exchange. Tel: 13520486719

A young lady who will work in Toronto starting this autumn needs a native American or Canadian to coach her in English. Mobile: 13701288340 Email: celia.lv@cn.ey.com

Pretty and healthy Chinese girl, single, in her twenties, well-educated and nature-loving, serious and optimistic about life and working as a Web designer, seeks a native English speaker for language exchange and friendship. Email: liyl1@grad.buct.edu.cn or steam_leeyu@hotmail.com

An accountant, 24, wants find a native English speaker for language exchange. Mobile: 13681170967 Email: xiaofang-lee@163.com

A senior university girl studying in Beijing wants to know some new friends whose native language is English. Tel: 6894 2137 Email: internalflame@sina.com

Mr. Zhang is searching for partners in English communication. Tel: 13001905780

An outgoing young woman, 24, would like to meet friends to practice spoken English. Email: gingeryw@hotmail.com

Personals

An eye doctor, 26, from Boai Eye Hospital who wants to start a new subject and get into another field wishes to make friends who like English. Email: hnpwyangdong@yahoo.com.cn

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Performance

Martial Monks

Monks from the Songshan Shaolin Temple take the stage in a dynamic performance of Shaolin kung fu. Since its premier at the Meet in Beijing Arts Festival in 2000, this dramatically choreographed spectacular went on hit tours of North America and Australia, entertaining over 300,000 people.

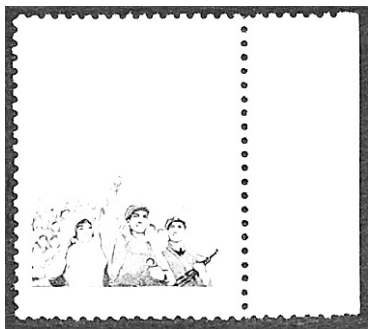
Where: Haidian Theatre, 28 Zhongguancun Dajie, about one mile north of Lianxiangqiao, **When:** May 27-30, 8 pm **Admission:** 80 yuan - 300 yuan **Tel:** 8401 6294, 6404 8781

Carmen

Under the baton of Yu Long, artistic director of the China Philharmonic Orchestra, Chinese and foreign vocal artists will perform the concert version of *Carmen* for four evenings. American mezzo sopranos Kirstin Chavez and Elizabeth Batton will play Carmen, accompanied by Chinese tenors Zhang Jianyi and Warren Mok as the hero Don Jose.

Where: Poly Theatre, Dongshishitiao, Chaoyang **When:** Friday to Monday, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 80 yuan - 680 yuan **Tel:** 8838 4171, 8838 4159

Auction

**Online Guardian Auction**

An auction of works by recent graduates of the Central Art Academy as well as pieces from other collections.

Where: www.guaweb.com

When: May 24-31

Exhibitions

Films of Chris Marker

Legendary French filmmaker Chris Marker gets his first China spotlight show. This pioneering series of screenings will present videos, movies and multimedia works that reflect Marker's strange and profound questions of memory and time.

Where: China Art Seasons Gallery, 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Dashanzi Art District, Chaoyang **When:** through Sunday, 2-7pm **Admission:** free **Tel:** 6431 1900

Three Artists' Paintings

Chinese artists Feng Feng, Zhang Jin and Yan Bo address the three themes of the Orient, modernism and nature through oil paintings.

Where: Yan Club, Dashanzi Art District, Chaoyang **When:** until May 26, 9:30 am - 6 pm **Admission:** free **Tel:** 6457 3506

Revolutionary Photography

Works by Liu Zheng constitute one part of a three-part thematic photographic exhibition

Io Non Ho Paura (I'm not Scared)



Directed by Gabriele Salvatores, starring Aitana Sanchez Gijon, Dino Abbrescia, Giuseppe Cristiano and Diego Abatantuono. A young boy growing up in a little village somewhere in Italy discovers another young boy hiding in a small hole. Nobody around seems to know anything about him - but then the enigma around the discovery is revealed when the first boy listens hidden to a conversation about the second boy - between his parents... Italian with English subtitles.

Where: Italian Embassy, 2 Dongerjie, Sanlitun **When:** May 27, 7 pm **Admission:** free **Tel:** 6532 2187

Weekend Plot (Miyu Shiqi Xiaoshi)

Directed by Zhang Ming, starring Zhang

Yalin and Guo Xiaodong. A bunch of former college friends find their leisurely outing turn sour in *Weekend Plot*. In director Zhang's second film, a leisurely outing of five 20-something Beijingers joined by a local cop friend takes a turn for the worse with the discovery of a note of unknown origin that reads, "I love you to death." Suspicion and hidden tensions bubble to the surface between the group, which includes a model, an engaged couple and the cop struggling through a crumbling marriage. This film received honors at the Pusan International Film Festival in South Korea and the Tokyo International Film Festival. Chinese with English subtitles.

Where: Cherry Lane Movie Theater,

29 Liangmaqiao Lu, Chaoyang **When:** Tonight, 8 pm **Admission:** 50 yuan **Tel:** 13501251303

**Shapes and Shadow**

This solo exhibition of Hungarian photographer Judit Stowe at the Chen Changfen Art Centre features scores of her latest works in black and white.

Where: Chen Changfen Art Centre, Room A211, Branch of National Library of China, 7 Wenjin Jie, Xicheng **When:** until May 30 (closed Monday, Tuesday), 10 am - 5 pm **Admission:** free **Tel:** 6612 6999

Activities

YPHH Jello Night at Alfa

Get jiggly at another Jello Night, brought to you by [010] Productions and YPHH, with no entrance fee and free jello-shots all night. Martinis will be priced at 35 yuan, food from fusion restaurant La Mission will be served on the second floor and a Xinjiang band will add cool tunes starting at 9 pm.

Where: Alfa, Xinfu Yicun, in the hutong opposite the North gate of Worker's Stadium, Chaoyang **When:** May 27, starting 6:30 pm **Admission:** free **Tel:** 6413 0086

Tour Temple and Museum of Chinese Emperors

Join experts from the Chinese Culture Club in a visit to a newly reopened temple museum dedicated to China's emperors and enjoy tales of great rulers long dead. Closed for three years for renovations, the museum occupies a large courtyard complex with many original wooden struc-

tures and statues. The tour will also include visits to the White Pagoda Temple, a Mongolian-style Buddhist structure built during Kublai Khan's reign in the Yuan Dynasty.

Where: Meet in front of White Pagoda Temple (Baitasi), Fuchengmennei Dajie, Xicheng **When:** Saturday, 2:30-4:30 pm **Admission:** 80 yuan **Tel:** 6482 2081

**BJ Hikers**

A backwards take on the 'Rise High' hike will lead us up a peak from a pass and down a mountain that stands 800 meters above sea-level.

Where: Changping District **When:** Sunday, meet 8:30 am at the Lido Hotel outside Starbucks **Admission:** 150 yuan **Tel:** 13910025516



Jams

Long Live the 80's and 90's

Jump back a couple of decades with a night of new wave, punk and pop.

Where: Vibes, 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Dashanzi Art District, Chaoyang **When:** 10 pm to late, **Admission:** free **Tel:** 6437 8082

P Party

The magic letter P stands not only for punk but also for perfect, prodigy, peace, popularity, pistol, power and even pain! Party to the power of P with bands Brain Failure (Naozhuo), New Pants (Xin Kuzi), SUBS, Joyside and No Need 70.

Where: Nameless Highland Bar, Building 14, Anhuili Area 1, Yayuncun (200 meters north of Yayuncun Hospital Intersection) Chaoyang **When:** Saturday, 9 pm **Admission:** 30 yuan **Tel:** 6489 1613

Femme Fatale Parties

Organized by the PSB, this series of ladies' nights includes showings of *Sex in the City* on the big screen, themed cocktails and groovy tunes.

Where: Lush, Second floor, Building 1, Huaqing Jiayuan, Wudaokou, Haidian **When:** every Saturday night from 9 pm **Admission:** free for women, 30 yuan for men **Tel:** 8286 3566

TV and Radio Highlights

CCTV-9

Monday - Friday

Around China 6:30 am

Documentary 8:30 am

Nature and Science

Chinese Civilization 11:30 am

Cultural Express 4:00 pm

Shanghai Today and

Learning Chinese 6 pm

Center Stage 7:30 pm

Sports Scene and Learning

Chinese 11 pm

Dialogue 12:30 pm

Saturday

Travelogue 9:30 am

World Insight 11:30 am

Sunday

China This Week 9:30 am

Business Guide 11:00 am

China Today 11:30 am

China Radio International 91.5 FM

Monday - Friday

Easy FM Afternoon 2-7 pm

Fun in Beijing 5:05-5:30 pm

Joy FM 9:05-11 pm

Saturday

Music Memories 8:05-11 am

Euro Hit 40 12:05-1 pm

Music Sans Frontiers 6:05-8 pm

Joy FM 9:05-11 pm

Sunday

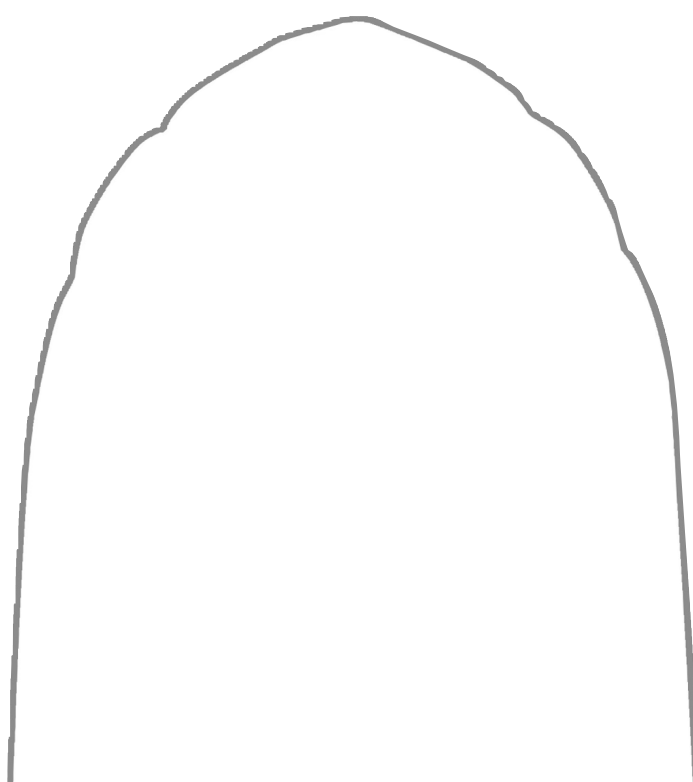
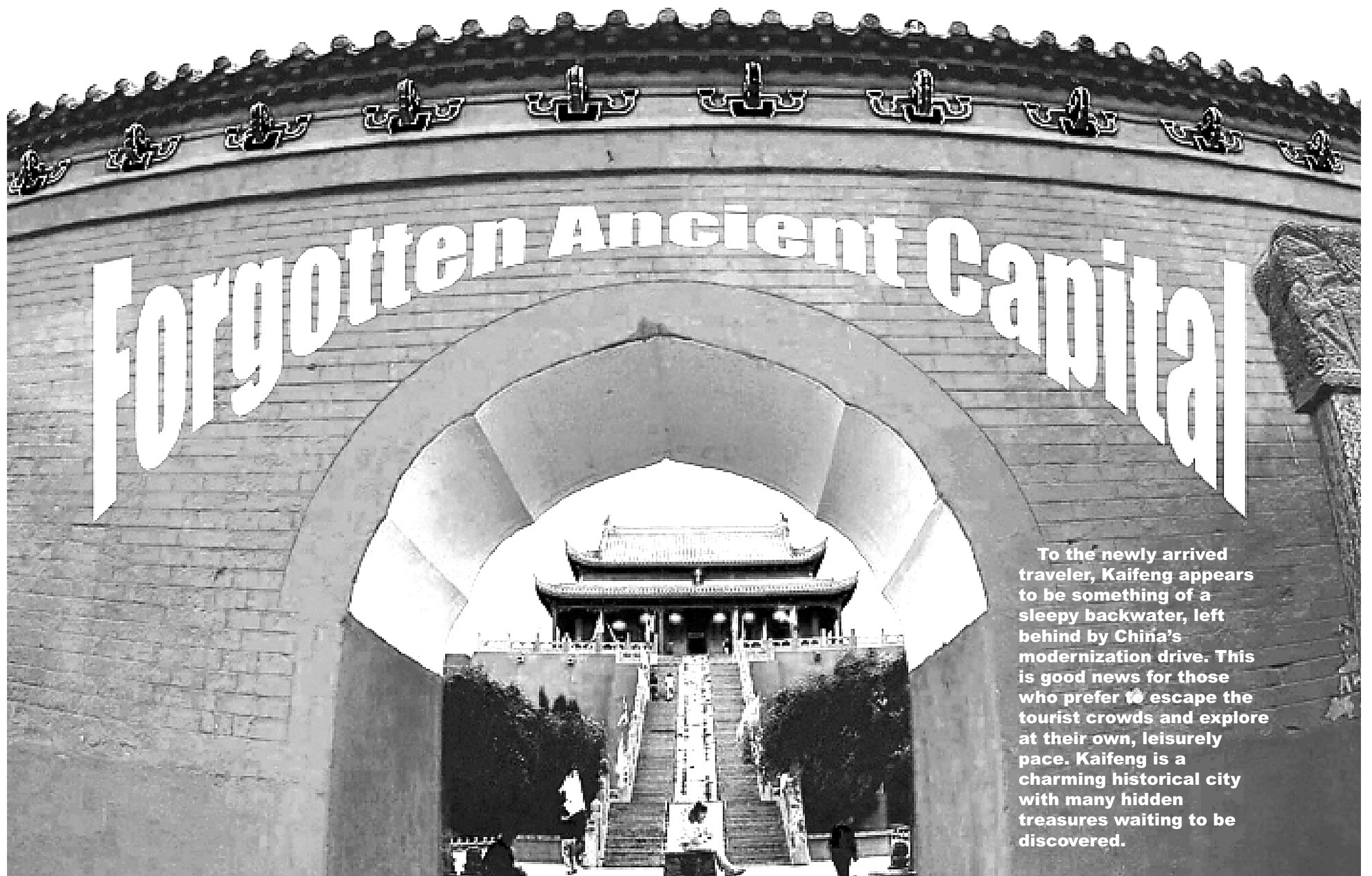
Music Memories 8:05-11 am

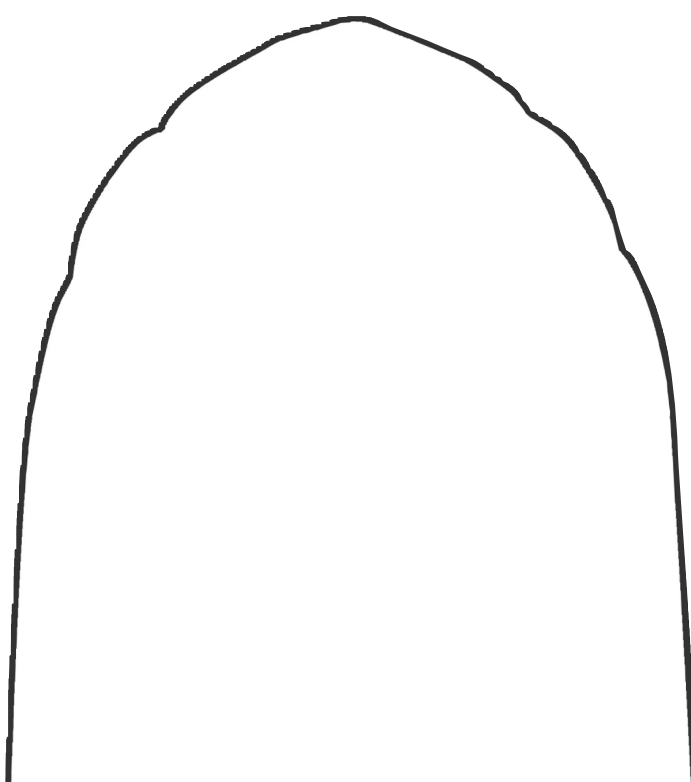
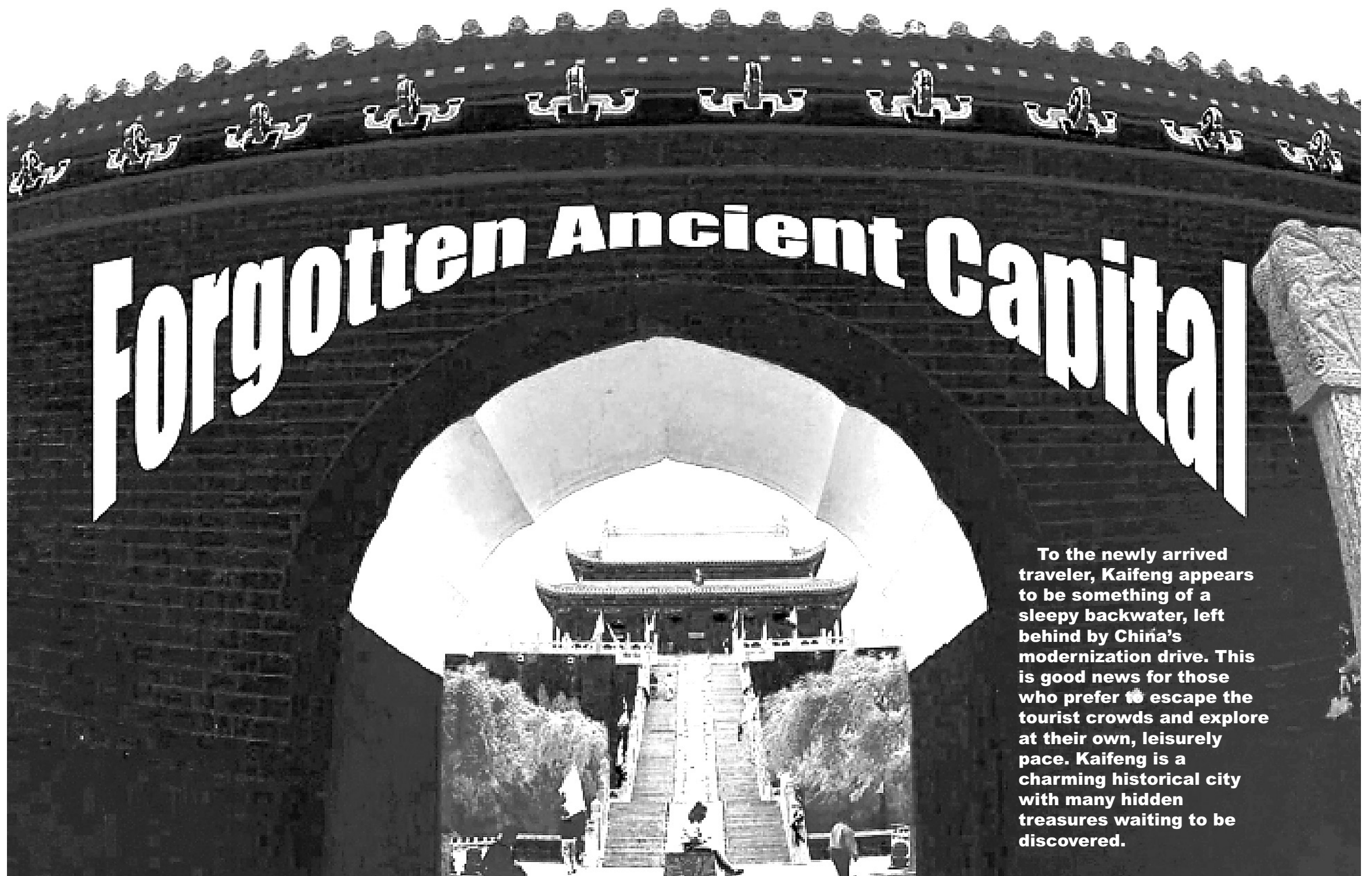
Jazz Beat 6:05-8 pm

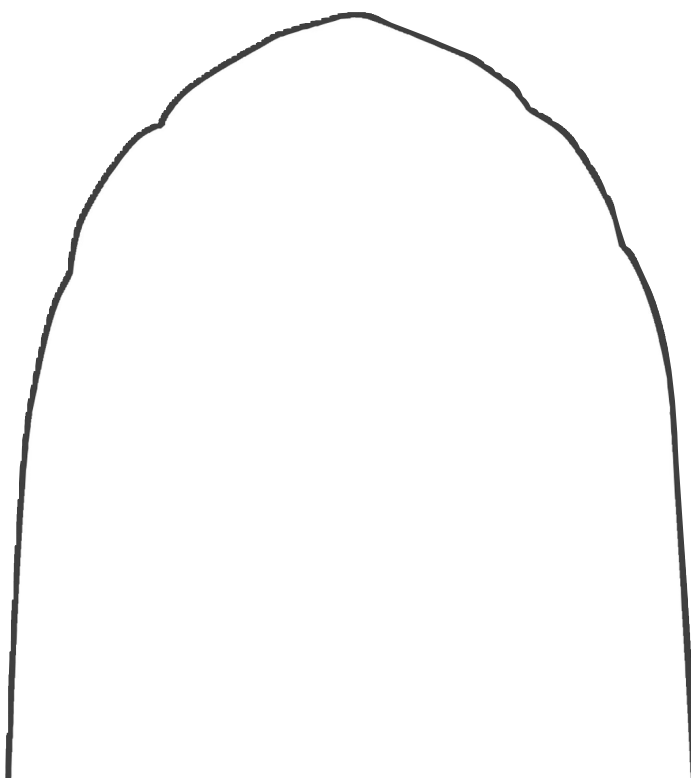
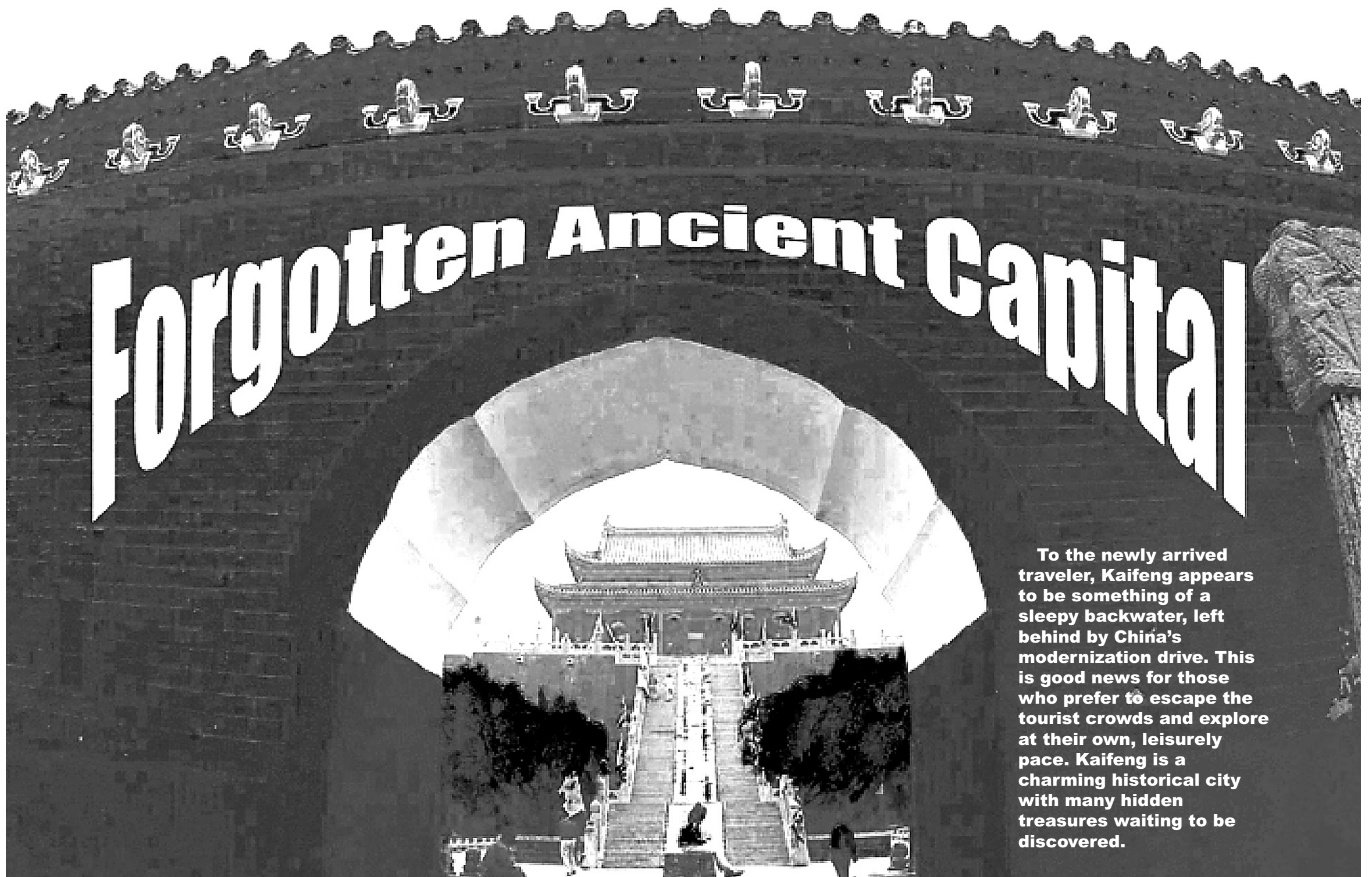
Joy FM 9:05-11 pm

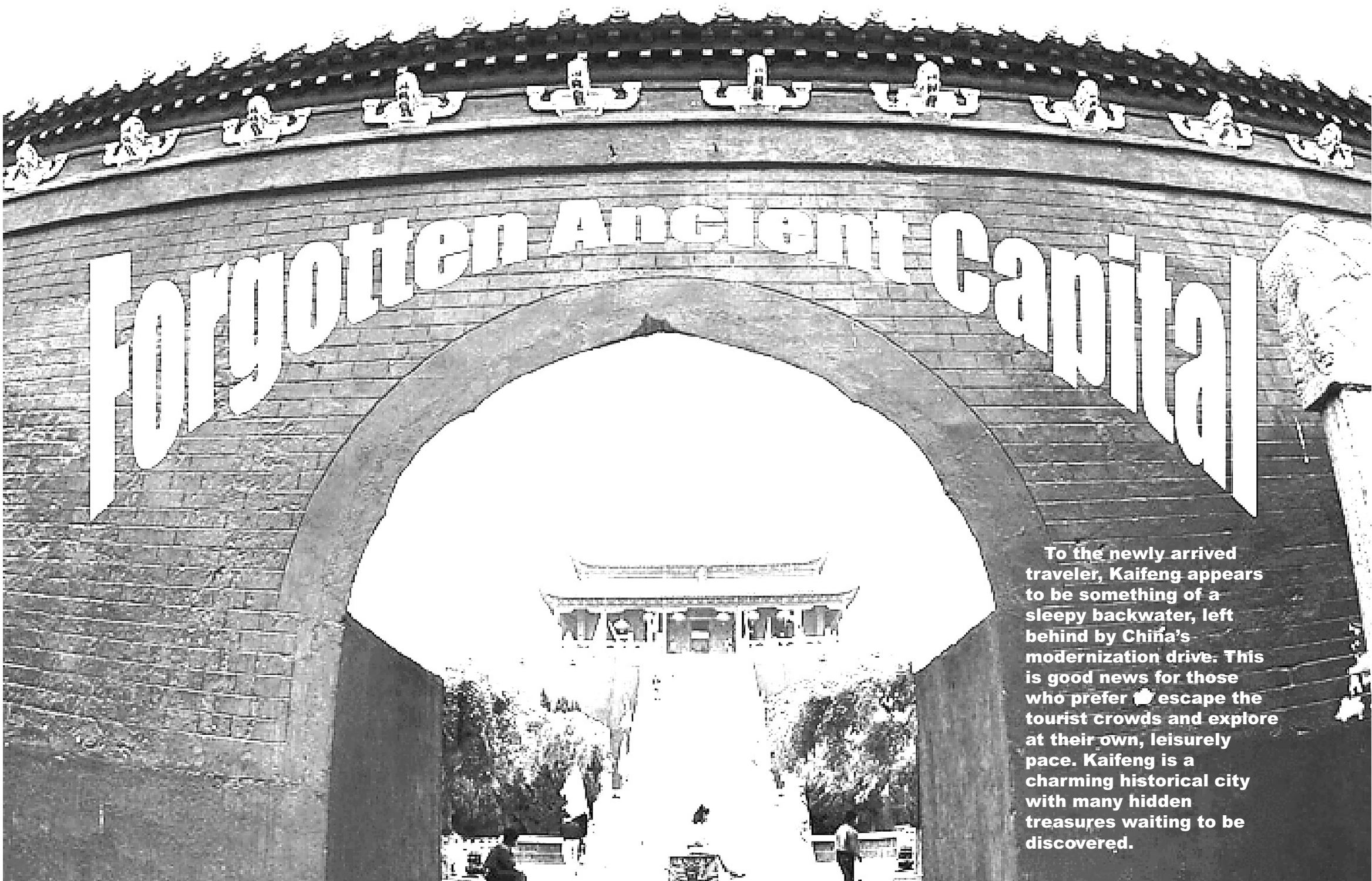
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By Lu Pinrou









To the newly arrived traveler, Kaifeng appears to be something of a sleepy backwater, left behind by China's modernization drive. This is good news for those who prefer to escape the tourist crowds and explore at their own, leisurely pace. Kaifeng is a charming historical city with many hidden treasures waiting to be discovered.

By Inesa Pleskacheuskaya

Dragon Pavilion Park

One of China's seven ancient capitals, Kaifeng, a city of more than 5 million in Henan Province, has a history of more than 2,300 years. Originally called Daliang, it was capital of the Wei Kingdom during the Warring States Period, and from 361 BC to 960 AD was capital of a succession of minor dynasties.

The economy of the city prospered during the Sui (581-618 AD) and Tang (618-907 AD) Dynasties, and peaked during the Northern Song Dynasty (960-1127 AD). In 960, it was renamed Dongjing (eastern capital), and became the capital of the Northern Song Dynasty. Nine emperors ruled from the city for 168 years.

With a population of over 1 million, Kaifeng at that time ranked among the most flourishing metropolises in the world. In fact, the layout of Beijing in the early years of the Ming Dynasty mimicked that of Kaifeng.

The city is also the earliest place in China where Jewish people settled. Archeological evidence shows the first Jews arriving as early as the 8th century. Many travelers, including Marco Polo in the 13th Century, wrote of meeting Jewish people.

The first synagogue was built in Kaifeng in 1163, and was destroyed and rebuilt many times. The last synagogue was destroyed between 1850 and 1866. During the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644 AD), seven Chinese surnames were conferred upon the Jews, by which their descendants are identifiable today: Ai, Lao, Jin, Li, Shi, Zhang and Zhao. Today, there are still around 200 of their descendants living in Kaifeng.

City sights

Many buildings of the Northern Song Dynasty survive in Kaifeng. Standing on a hill north of Henan University in the northeastern part of the city, the Iron Pagoda (Tieta) was



Da Xiangguo Temple

built in 982.

The pagoda was originally part of Kaibao Temple. In 1049, the timber frame was covered with iron-colored glazed tiles, hence its name.

The thirteen-story pagoda rises to about sixty meters. On the brick base are exquisitely carved patterns of animals, Buddhist motifs and flora.

Open: 8 am to 6 pm daily
Admission: 15 yuan to enter the park, an additional 3 yuan to climb the pagoda

In the western section of Ziyou Lu can be found one of the most famous Buddhist temples in China – Da Xiangguo Si (Great Xiangguo Temple). It was first built in 555, but was destroyed during civil war. In 711, a monk built a new temple on the site and donated a three-meter-high Buddha statue.

In the Song Dynasty, the temple was favored by the emperors and was expanded in scale. It became a key center of Buddhism, where monks from India, Japan and Korea came to meet the emperor.

A wooden statue of a Bodhisattva carved out of a ginkgo trunk in the Arhat Hall is most impressive. The Bodhisattva has 1,048 hands and on each hand is a small sacred eye. In the same hall is a group carving of five hundred Arhats.

The Bell Pavilion with a huge bell cast in 1768, during the reign of Qianlong, is another must see. It is said that the sound of the bell travels the longest distance when it is struck on a frosty day.

Open: 8 am to 6 pm daily
Admission: 15 yuan

The city wall was rebuilt and enlarged during the successive



The Iron Pagoda

Photos by Imaginechina

Tips

Kaifeng is blessed with a temperate climate with four distinct seasons. The best time to visit is during the annual Chrysanthemum Festival, which runs from October 28 to November 28 at Longting Gongyuan. Another good time to go is during the annual Yu Wang Temple Festival, from April 18 to May 8. This is an excellent opportunity to see traditional Chinese culture and sample some delicious local specialties. Lion dances, tightrope walking (actually on a narrow wooden beam

rather than a rope), Henan and Peking operas are featured.
Getting there:
Air: The nearest airport is in the provincial capital Zhengzhou. There are numerous daily flights between Beijing and Zhengzhou, nominally priced at 1,380 yuan (return), but discount fares as low as 1,100 yuan are frequently available.
Train: There are daily trains between Beijing and Kaifeng. The trip takes 10 hours, hard sleeper – 175 yuan.



Yu Street

dynasties that ruled from Kaifeng. It is 14 kilometers long and 11 meters high. There are four corner towers and eight defense towers. Although the gates have been destroyed, the rest of the wall is almost entirely intact.

In the northwest of Kaifeng, is Longting Gongyuan (Dragon Pavilion Park). During the Northern Song and Jin dynasties, this was the site of the imperial palaces. The principle part of the Longting complex stood on the site now occupied by the Longting Main Hall, built in 1734 during the reign of Yongzheng of the Qing Dynasty. It has a stone foundation, about 13 meters high, with seventy-two stairs leading to the top, and is decorated with yellowish-green glazed tiles and delicate sculptures.

Inside lies a huge black stone block called the Dragon Stone, around which thirteen rolling dragons have been engraved. Wax figures and portraits of Song emperors are on display in the hall.

A park established on the site in 1963, designated as a provincial level relic, is a popular place for people to meet and play chess and mahjong.

Shopping

The best place for souvenir shopping in Kaifeng is Yu Street of the Song Dynasty Capital, newly built next to Longting Gongyuan. The original Yu Street once led to the Imperial Palace. The reconstructed street maintains a distinctive Song Dynasty architectural style, and deserves a visit even if you walk away empty-handed.

The main local products on sale are embroidery, porcelain and New Year's paintings. Many ancient Chinese cities

have their own distinctive style of embroidery, and Kaifeng is no exception. The local embroidery, which originated in the Song Dynasty, is known as *bian xiu* (bian stands for Kaifeng, xiu means embroidery.)

Song porcelain holds a special place in the hearts of collectors. Today, any visitor to Kaifeng can buy *guan yao ci qi* – well made copies of that style.

Another local specialty, from Zhuxianzheng, a town near Kaifeng, is *Zhuxianzheng muzhi nianhua* – Lunar New Year (Chinese New Year) paintings. This art form has a history of 800 years, and is produced today by the same methods it has been for centuries.

Another good place for strolling and occasional souvenir buying is the open-air temple market near Xiangguo Temple.

Snacks

A must for a trip to any destination in China is sampling the local delicacies – and as a former capital, Kaifeng definitely has its own distinctive food specialties.

Among these are *li yu bei mian* – fish with very thin fried noodles on top, *wuxiang doufu gan* – five spiced dried tofu, *rouhe* – fried vegetables and pork (or mutton in its Islamic version) stuffed into a flat bread.

Some local delicacies have imperial roots, such as *tongzi ji* – specially cooked chicken, and *tao si bao*, a dish consisting of a whole quail stuffed in a whole pigeon, inside a whole duck or chicken.

One of the best places to try these delicacies in an authentic atmosphere while watching the locals is the Drum Tower Night Market, near the corner of Gulou Jie and Madao Jie.

Relatively few foreigners visit Kaifeng, and they still attract considerable attention from the locals, so be prepared, and smile – it is a good way to communicate even without knowing the language.